

Sophomore Advisor Position Description
2012-2013



Office of Residence Life

UNIVERSITY
of
ST. THOMAS

Select sophomore students hold the honorary position of Sophomore Advisor (SA). The Sophomore Advisor has the responsibility of helping to promote individual growth among first year student residents and of assisting with the development and implementation of programs geared toward the special needs of first-year student-residents. By working closely with Resident Assistants, Sophomore Advisors help to create a community atmosphere that extends from their assigned floor, to the residence hall, to the entire campus community. Sophomore Advisors are expected to support the University's Catholic mission by maintaining the highest possible moral and ethical standards in their work with others. It is expected that Sophomore Advisors are sincerely interested in the spiritual, academic, and social welfare of students and the University.

TERMS OF SERVICE

Service begins on the first day of summer training and ends on the day after the last scheduled final exam for the spring semester. Continuation of service is contingent upon the SA's success as a role model and mentor to first-year traditional student-residents, the completion of assigned tasks, a positive evaluation, demonstration of personal and professional growth, and a continual enthusiasm for the Residence Life program.

REMUNERATION

The Sophomore Advisor position is an honorary service opportunity and not eligible for room and board scholarships. However, a Sophomore Advisor who has shown growth in leadership skills, successfully completed his/her term of service, and has received an excellent evaluation will qualify for priority employment status for the position of Resident Assistant.

TIME COMMITMENT

A. Work Load

It is fully understood that student personnel work in residence halls is not easily translated into hours worked per day or week. It is understood that Sophomore Advisors should be available to their residents most evening hours and at various times on weekends.

B. Course Load

Sophomore Advisors should carry a minimum of twelve (12) hours and no more than seventeen (17) hours. An academic course load of less than seventeen (17) hours is recommended for the first semester of service.

C. Time Off

Sophomore Advisors are expected to notify the Area Coordinators prior to leaving the residence hall for an overnight period. Whenever possible, Sophomore Advisors should provide the Area Coordinators with a telephone number where they may be reached in the event of an emergency.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Sophomore Advisors will be assigned to a staff room (double occupancy) with another staff member.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Sophomore Advisors must maintain at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average and a 2.0 semester GPA. Should a Sophomore Advisor's G.P.A. fall below this standard, he/she will be placed on probation for one semester and be required to meet regularly with the Area Coordinators and other support staff as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Residence Life administrators. If the Sophomore Advisor fails to bring his/her G.P.A. up to standard, he/she may be removed from the SA position and barred from applying for staff for a period of at least one year. Every effort will be made by the Residence Life administrators and the Area Coordinators to support the academic success of each individual Sophomore Advisor.

EVALUATION

Formal written evaluation of the Sophomore Advisor's job performance will occur at the beginning of the spring semester. Residents will be surveyed in November to determine the level of satisfaction with the job performance of their Sophomore Advisors and Resident Assistants. In addition, staff will be given the opportunity to provide a written evaluation of their individual job performance

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and that of their co-workers. A poor evaluation will be considered just cause for placing a Sophomore Advisor on probation or for dismissing a Sophomore Advisor from her/his duties and responsibilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Sophomore Advisors are expected to be mature and attuned to the goals of the Office of Residence Life and the University's Catholic academic mission. Sophomore Advisors should assist Resident Assistants in creating an environment on the floor and in the residence hall that is conducive to the aspirations and achievements of a community of scholars. The following is a summary of significant expectations for Sophomore Advisors:

- A. Welcome new students and assist them with the check-in process. Greet and welcome parents and others accompanying our residents to campus.
- B. Express an interest in and develop a rapport with each resident of their assigned floor. Personalize the residence hall environment for each resident.
- C. Seek to identify resident attitudes and interests; academic achievements and difficulties; health, emotional, and behavioral problems; and leadership potential.
- D. Become knowledgeable of referral sources available to students on campus. Specifically, all Student Affairs Departments and Department Directors; Academic Advisors, Deans, financial aid officers, and Campus Safety Officers. In addition, SAs should become knowledgeable of community services such as clinics and free counseling services.
- E. Be available to meet with residents at regularly scheduled times.
- F. Work with residents to develop a community atmosphere on the assigned floor that facilitates respect and concern for others, openness, personal growth, and that is conducive to study.
- G. Under the direction of the Area Coordinators and in cooperation with the assigned Resident Assistants, assist in the development and implementation of programs for all residents.
- H. Respond in a timely and calm manner to emergency/crisis situations involving the emotional, mental, physical, and psychological well-being of residents.

EDUCATION

Sophomore Advisors serve as role models to first-year students. Because Sophomore Advisors have recently and successfully completed their first-year at the University of St. Thomas, they possess the unique ability to relate to the special needs of first-year traditional student-residents. Sophomore Advisors must act as positive role models and effective mentors by regularly attending classes, studying, being successful in the classroom, and by promoting the academic success of their residents. Sophomore Advisors should also abide by all city, county, state, and federal laws, and University and Residence Life policies, rules, and regulations. By so doing, they demonstrate the importance of good citizenship and the importance of maintaining constant respect for the worth and dignity of each person. Sophomore Advisors should also:

- A. By creating quality academic programs; SAs will maintain an awareness of academic and support services available to residents on and off campus.
- B. Ensure that residents are familiar and comply with University and Residence Life policies and procedures. Assist residents in understanding the rationale for policies and procedures and relay the consequences of improper behavior to them. Sophomore Advisors should immediately report infractions of policy to their RAs and Area Coordinators.
- C. Provide support and direction to residents and the Residence Council by contributing ideas, assistance in planning and executing plans, and through attendance at hall programs.
- D. Recognize and develop leadership potential in residents and seek to involve residents in the hall governing and planning process.

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- E. Under the direction of the Area Coordinators and in cooperation with the assigned RAs, work to develop and implement programs that will encourage community, critical thinking, and respect for the worth and dignity of others.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

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

- A. Assist in the opening of the residence hall.
- B. Maintain communication with the Area Coordinators and assigned RAs and share any/all information that in any way might warrant their attention.
- C. Attend all staff training sessions, in-service workshops, weekly meetings, programs, and activities deemed to be necessary by the Area Coordinators and/or Residence Life administrators.
- D. Perform other duties deemed necessary by the Area Coordinators and/or Residence Life administrators.

COMMUNICATION

Sophomore Advisors play a crucial role in determining how students perceive the Office of Residence Life and the University. SAs are representatives of the Residence Life program and as such, are also representatives of the University of St. Thomas. Sophomore Advisors are expected to communicate and/or represent criticisms, suggestions, and ideas to the Area Coordinators. SAs should respond to criticisms, suggestions, and ideas in a rational, mature, calm, and productive manner. Anger should never be met by anger. Sophomore Advisors are expected to maintain a positive and productive working relationship with their co-workers. A Sophomore Advisor who has a problem with another staff member should either confront that staff member or share his/her concern with the Area Coordinators. Sophomore Advisors may not, under any circumstance, share information about one resident with another resident. It is further expected that Sophomore Advisors will maintain confidentiality in regards to all information shared with them by residents. Sophomore Advisors will also refrain from sharing information gained from staff members (including the Residence Life administrators and all other members of the Student Affairs team). Any SA having knowledge of a staff member violating confidentiality will have an obligation to report that breach of conduct to the Area Coordinators. Residents must be able to view the staff as being worthy of their trust. Staff must also be viewed as a cohesive group.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Numerous opportunities for self-improvement and development are available to Sophomore Advisors. The Area Coordinators will work with the Sophomore Advisors to assist them in their personal growth by making these opportunities available and known. Sophomore Advisors are encouraged to use their time on staff productively by taking advantage of opportunities to develop their potential to become leaders, and to become active, involved, assertive members of the staff and the community. Towards this end, Sophomore Advisors should:

- A. Consult with the Area Coordinators frequently to discuss their job performance.
- B. Schedule and attend a formal evaluation with the Area Coordinators and Residence Life Administrators in January.
- C. Be involved in training.
- D. Read all materials provided by the Residence Life administrators, Area Coordinators, and other University Administrators, Faculty, and Staff.
- E. Periodically review this job description to evaluate her/his own job performance.

TERMINATION OF SERVICE

When, in the opinion of the Residence Life administrators, Area Coordinators, or Assistant Vice President of Campus Life, a Sophomore Advisor is not fulfilling the terms and conditions of his/her contract, the Area Coordinators will schedule a conference with the SA. In conference, the Area Coordinators will formally notify the Sophomore Advisor that her/his job performance is considered to be substandard. The SA will be given the opportunity to respond to the concerns issued by the Area Coordinators. The Area Coordinators will then meet privately with the Residence Life administrators to decide if a course of action is necessary. Possible action that may be taken against a Sophomore Advisor found to be negligent in her/his duties consists of the following:

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- ❖ Probation for a period not to exceed one semester. The Area Coordinators will provide the Sophomore Advisor with written expectations for the probationary period. The SA will meet on a regularly scheduled basis with the Area Coordinators to evaluate his/her job performance. If at any time during the probationary period, the Area Coordinator or Residence Life administrators are dissatisfied with the job performance of the SA, the Area Coordinators in cooperation with the Residence Life administrators, may terminate the SA from her/his staff position.
- ❖ Termination may occur during or after the probationary period if a Sophomore Advisor has failed to meet the written expectations of the Area Coordinators. Termination may automatically occur if it is determined that there has been gross neglect of duty on the part of the SA. Gross neglect may range from dishonesty to breaching confidentiality.

A Sophomore Advisor who is removed from his/her position will be relocated to another hall/wing. A Sophomore Advisor removed from her/his position may not reside in a staff room. Housing arrangements for a Sophomore Advisor removed from his/her job shall be at the discretion of the Residence Life administrators. In the event that space is unavailable for relocation of a terminated SA, it will be necessary for the SA to locate off-campus housing. Under such circumstance, the terminated employee will be permitted to remain in the residence hall no longer than seven days after notification from the Director of Residence Life.

A Sophomore Advisor may appeal a termination decision. An appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to the Director of Residence Life within five business days of the date of notice of termination. A committee of the Student Services Staff will hear appeals. SAs will not be allowed legal or other representation in an appeal. Appeals are final.

A Sophomore Advisor who contracts for a staff position and later decides to forfeit the offered position, also forfeits her/his assigned room and will be assigned campus housing at the discretion of the Residence Life administrators.