Community Assistant Position Description

Academic Year: 2013-2014
(Bayou Oaks Townhouses)

The Community Assistant (CA) leadership role can be a remarkable life-changing experience. This position as a student affairs educator has tremendous rewards in the form of skills, knowledge, experience, lifelong friendships, and a true ability to make a positive difference in the lives of others and the fraternity and sorority community. Although you will be challenged in terms of your patience, time management, organization, academics, boundaries, and personal relationships, many student staff members have felt this opportunity was completely worth the time and energy invested.

In general, CAs provide support that assists students particularly fraternity and sorority members in achieving personal, social, and academic goals, as well as helping them to develop skills essential to productive citizenry and fraternal membership. In addition, CAs have the unique opportunity to build community through being accessible, providing an array of social, educational, and recreational activities, encouraging resident interaction, working with organization advisors, and being a role model as an interested and active member of the UH community. Because CAs are students first, their academics are paramount, followed closely by the CA position. Extra-curricular activities, leadership roles, and employment must be approved by the Greek Housing Coordinator to ensure all Bayou Oaks Staff maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle. In general, the CA position is a 20-hour per week commitment, with time periods that may or may not exceed this average.

The UH fraternity and sorority members experience complex living issues due to our unique Greek housing model and townhouse structure. Issues often revolve around the use and maintenance of shared common spaces or room space, alcohol and other drug usage, hosting social events, noise levels, cooking and cleaning styles, and personal schedules. CAs who share Student Housing and Residential Life and Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life commitment, passion, and dedication to the following values will not only be successful relationship and community builders, but will experience tremendous benefits as a leader, role model, friend, student, peer, colleague and fraternity/sorority member:

A. Building relationships with residents and between residents. A CAs primary goal is as a community builder, knowing their residents and helping them to get to know each other. Network them, support them, teach them, laugh with them, cry with them, learn with them, and grow with them. This is the heart of what Student Housing and Residential Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life student affairs educators do.

B. Nurture student success & satisfaction. CAs facilitate discussions, activities, and events that promote academic progress and achievement, in addition to supporting and assisting residents with critical thinking and problem solving skills. As leaders at UH, upholding community standards to the best of an CAs ability is critical, being sure to address issues and concerns in timely manner. Our goal is to make living in fraternity/sorority housing be the best experience possible.

C. An ethic of care. Our staff react quickly and appropriately to issues and concerns. Students, parents, faculty, and staff feel heard, valued, and cared about when we work with them.
Expectations of this Leadership Position

Under the supervision of the Greek Housing Coordinator, Community Assistants serve as liaisons between Student Housing and Residential Life, the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life, chapters and residents. The following sections outline what Student Housing and Residential Life and the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life expects of Community Assistants, as well as what our student staff can expect from our departments. Each section has a designated space where you will indicate your understanding of what is listed in that area by signing your initials once offered the position. As you read through this position description and agreement, please make note of any questions you may have and be sure to gain clarification, if needed, from the Greek Housing Coordinator prior to signing.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- Must be a student at UH working towards a degree. All undergraduates must be enrolled and attending classes with a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester for the period of the appointment. Your direct supervisor must approve more than 18 credit hours per semester.
- Good academic standing at UH must be demonstrated upon application and maintained throughout appointment. This means that Community Assistants must have, and maintain, at the beginning and throughout the appointment, the following:
  - A cumulative grade point average of 2.5.
  - A semester grade point average of 2.5.
  - Have passed at least 12 credit hours the semester prior to, and each semester throughout the appointment (academic work during summer sessions does not count towards Fall or Spring GPA or credits earned, but may impact Cumulative GPA).
  - Meet all chapter academic requirements.
- Failure to maintain these academic requirements will result in academic probation and/or early termination from the position.
  - New CAs failing to meet all criteria (semester and cumulative GPA; passed units) by the start of employment could result in termination prior to the appointment start date.
  - If a CA currently on staff or returning to staff is missing one of these four ‘good standing’ criteria, it will result in academic probation for one semester. After which, if all four criteria are not met, the CAs position will be terminated.
  - If a CA currently on staff or returning to staff is missing two or more of these criteria at the end of an academic semester, it will result in the position being terminated, and that individual will not be eligible to apply for the position until all four criteria are met.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Approachability – demonstrated ability to be friendly, open, and maintain a positive, helpful attitude when interacting with others.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Awareness of university, Student Housing and Residential Life, and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life policies and procedures, as well as their importance to maintaining a safe, secure, and educationally focused living environment.
- Knowledge of, and ability to work with, diverse individuals and groups.
- Demonstrated commitment to UH Vision Statement and ability to contribute to its implementation within Student Housing and Residential Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life.
- Active undergraduate membership in an organization currently holding a Master Lease at Bayou Oaks for the duration of employment.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience in leading peers and/or serving as a positive role model.
- Ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships.
- Ability to effectively mediate in problem situations.
- Willingness to experience new and different opportunities, as well as being open to learn new skills
- Ability to be flexible in unclear and ambiguous situations.
• Have at least one (1) completed semester of on-campus living experience (or other approved "similar experience") prior to the employment start date.

**POSITION REQUIREMENTS**

• CA appointments are made for one academic year (mid-July to mid-May) and/or for a 10 week summer period (mid-May to mid-July), if applicable. Re-appointment to the position is not guaranteed and is based upon performance throughout the appointment period. Incumbents interested in returning must be recommended for re-appointment by their supervisor.

• CAs are required to complete a background check prior to the start of employment.
  o Results of the background check will be reviewed, and may prompt a review of the candidate’s appropriateness for the position, or cause the revocation of the CA position offer.
  o All students must complete a criminal background check.
    ▪ The criminal background check form requires general personal information as well as all previous U.S. addresses since the age of 17. The form is all that is needed. The form then goes to HR, then to UHPD for the background check, which usually takes 1-2 weeks, depending on whether or not they’re a resident of Texas.
    ▪ Failure to pass the CHRI process will result in immediate termination of the individual from any security sensitive position.

• Selected Fall staff are not to take any UH Session IV summer school classes or external courses that would interfere with Fall RA Training. Failure to complete all or part of Fall or Spring training sessions will be cause for employment review and probable termination.

• In compliance with the University of Houston’s employment policy, each Community Assistant is on probation for the first six weeks of each semester of employment.

• All Community Assistants must also sign a housing agreement.

• Must be available via phone and UH e-mail daily throughout the period of the appointment. E-mail, phone voicemail, and staff mailbox must be checked daily. CA’s UH e-mail addresses will be published and made available to the residents enabling them to contact CAs when necessary. Additionally, CAs private phone numbers will be made available to only Student Housing and Residential Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life staff for emergency purposes.

• CAs are responsible for reading and understanding the RA/CA manual, University of Houston policies, Student Housing and Residence Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life policies and procedures, and any additional assigned literature, in addition to seeking clarification when necessary. It is better to ask questions to gain a better understanding, than to guess an answer and potentially lead someone astray.

• CAs are responsible for completing required training offered through Human Resources beginning in October. Failure to complete this training by the deadline may result in position termination.

• Must be in “Good Standing” with Student housing and Residence Life, the University (Conduct and Judicial Status, as well as financially and academically) and the chapter for which the CA is a member. As a role model, fraternity/ sorority leader and student affairs educator, it is critical to uphold and adhere to all University policies, including the Student Code of Conduct, Student Housing and Residential Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life policies and procedures, and the fraternal values of the CA’s national organization, realizing the impact on the community and staff when these standards are violated.

• CA rooms are assigned specifically to meet the needs of the community. A CA is assigned half of a room. In the event that the CA contract is terminated, voluntarily or otherwise, the CA will be required to move into another room/suite/apartment outside of the Bayou Oaks townhomes.

• CAs must reside in room B of the townhouse which they are member.

• CAs must be available to serve in the on-duty rotation during Thanksgiving/Fall Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, and all University holidays.

**GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

• It is expected RAs walk their communities on a daily basis to connect with residents, check for safety issues, and assess/report facilities concerns. Building relationships and community is the primary job focus for CAs. As such, it is also expected that CAs spend the majority nights while on campus in their assigned room and available to their residents.
• The following categories list the areas in which many of the CA job expectations will fall under. They are also followed by things in which students should expect to learn as a result of being an CA.

• In general, as a result of being an CA, students will learn to:
  o Serve as a role model by being involved in the campus and fraternity/sorority community, following community standards, excelling at job responsibilities, supporting team efforts, bringing forth new ideas, upholding UH’s mission and excelling academically.
  o Articulate and support the mission of the Department through actions and words.
  o Demonstrate respect for students, parents, families, campus partners, and other Residential Life & Housing and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life staff members.
  o Demonstrate knowledge of Student Housing and Residence Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life programs and services, as well as all campus resources available to UH students.
  o Demonstrate their ability to maintain a good work/life balance by balancing school, personal, and CA responsibilities.

Community Development
• Learn the names of all assigned residents and all assigned organization officers.
• Demonstrate approachability, availability, and visibility in an effort to enhance community development and support student success.
• Maintain an “open door” policy in order to see and interact with residents.
• Supports the programming efforts sponsored by student clubs and organizations (including, but not limited to Faculty in Residence, Student Government Association, RHA, HPC, IFC, LGC, MGC, NPHC etc.) and campus partners.
• Maintain and regularly update (based on dates provided by your supervisor) passive programing materials (bulletin boards, newsletters etc.).
• Actively participates and encourages community participation in Student Housing and Residence Life, Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life and university programs and activities.
• CAs on duty over break periods and ‘long weekends’ may be expected to coordinate programs for students remaining on campus.
• Mediate conflict between community members.
• Students will create an inclusive environment for their residents that support fraternal values, social awareness and foster diversity.
• Serve as a resource and referral agent, identifying potential problems (i.e. alcohol/substance abuse/dependence, psychological distress, date/acquaintance rape, FIPG or social policy violations, etc.), informing their direct supervisor or AC on Duty, directing student(s) to appropriate resources, and documenting situation.
• Work collaboratively as a team with the Bayou Oaks Resident Assistants.
• As a result of being an CA students will learn to:
  o Articulate strategies that help them get to know all of their residents.
  o Construct everyday opportunities to advance their relationships with residents.

The Community Assistant Commitment to Confidentiality
• Student Housing and Residential Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life is dedicated to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our staff and residents. This includes refraining from gossip or negative comments about others.
• No personal information (including, but not limited to identity, assignment, address, contact information, conduct history, financial records, etc.) shall be revealed, unless that individual provides written documentation authorizing the disclosure of that information.
• When an individual waives confidentiality, staff or student members must exercise utmost caution not to exceed the parameters of the waiver. Any doubt regarding disclosure must always be resolved in favor of confidentiality.
• Any breach of confidentiality is a serious matter and may be cause for removal as a staff member from Student Housing and Residence Life.
Develop ways to connect residents and organizations to one another and the greater campus community.

- Mediate roommate and organizational conflicts to ensure mutually beneficial solutions.
- Organize townhouse and community wide events to support community development and student success that are in line with shared fraternal values.

Safety and Security

- Serve as a role model, especially in reference to University of Houston policies as listed in the Code of Conduct available on the Dean of Students website as well as FIPG and Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life Social Policy which can be found on the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life website.
- All documentation of incidents and/or resident/guest behavior must be submitted within 24 hours or by 8am the next business day, whichever is sooner.
- Maintain confidentiality while working with community members and organizations (CAs MUST report life threatening situations, sexual assault/abuse, alleged policy violations, and any potentially dangerous situations to the Greek Housing Coordinator or RLC on Duty immediately).
- Interprets and explains Community Standards, FIPG, Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life Social Policy to residents, including rationale and background, helping residents understand the impact negative behavior can have on a community.
- CAs are required to participate on a rotating duty schedule year round– including Thanksgiving, Winter Break, Spring Break, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Summer break, and Labor Day periods. Duty schedules will vary according to the residential community; however, all CAs are expected to remain on campus (days and nights) the majority of the semester, with extended leave requests approved by their supervisor. All CAs are on call as required.
- CAs must remain on campus until the university is officially closed for break. CAs who are on duty during break must remain on campus while on duty. Permission to leave early or return late must be approved by a CAs direct supervisor.
- Major campus/community special events (including, but not limited to Cougar Preview, Homecoming, Halloween, Frontier Fiesta, Family Weekend, Fall Break, Spring Break, etc.) may require CAs to perform ‘extra’ duty coverage.
- CAs will assist with implementation of fire safety standards including but not limited to fire inspections, fire drills, and emergency evacuation plans.
- When on duty, CAs may be expected to conduct frequent ‘Fire Walks’ if emergency systems fail temporarily, serve as resources at UH sponsored events, or conduct community programming.
- Initially respond to any alleged violation of university policy, document situations, inform RLC on duty or Greek Housing Coordinator immediately, and provide follow up with residents involved.
- CAs will be prepared to deal with behavioral problems and emergencies with the support of professional staff as outlined in training.
- As a result of being an CA, students will learn to:
  - Respond to incidents in line with departmental protocol.
  - Respond appropriately to crisis situations.
  - Complete incident reports concisely and accurately.
  - Describe several ways to follow up with residents after an incident.
  - Articulate and enforce community standards and fraternal values.

Administrative

- Assist with fall and spring openings (Move-in/Check-in), Check-Out activities, room-suite/apartment inspections, and end of semester closing events.
- Report regularly on an informal basis and bi-weekly in writing to their supervisor (pending supervisory discretion) on community happenings and concerns.
- Participate and assist in coordinating assessment activities, including staff evaluations, community assessment instruments, and surveys administered by campus partners.
- Attends weekly staff meetings and in-services held Wednesday at 9pm or at a time approved by the Greek Housing Coordinator.
• Attends regularly scheduled one-on-one meetings with Greek Housing Coordinator.
• CAs must receive approval at least 24 hours in advance from the Greek Housing Coordinator if they cannot attend meetings in order to make other arrangements of assigned tasks.
• Participate on one of several building-specific or department-wide committees, working approximately 2-3 hours a week (on average) to accomplish committee goals and projects – ‘work’ may be completed during meetings or as ‘homework.’
  • Realize some weeks may be more work than others and each committee will be different
  • Attendance – CAs should be attending every meeting, unless previous approval is received from committee advisor/chair (not supervisor)
  • Committee members are responsible for sharing regular updates and seeking feedback during staff meetings on committee projects
  • It is the goal of Student Housing and Residence Life for committee responsibilities to help further develop CAs knowledge and skills in various areas –while the projects committees are working on are important to residents and the department, this work is more about the process than the product.
  • CAs should regularly report the progress of the committee to the Greek Housing Coordinator.
• Check CA mailbox, email (address provided to supervisor), and voicemail (if applicable) daily.
• Report any resident and facilities concerns to their supervisor, conducting follow-up as needed.
• CAs may be issued access to a staff office key during the term of their position.
• Serve regularly scheduled office hours for the purpose of intentional interaction with residents as approved by the Greek Housing Coordinator.

### Keys and Building Security

- As a Student Housing and Residential Life student staff educator, CAs are trusted with key access to multiple rooms within the building to which they are assigned. It is critical all staff are aware of, and agree to, the following:
  - CAs will maintain possession of the checked out key(s) at all times
  - Keys need to be returned immediately after use
  - If a key(s) is lost, the responsible CA will incur all necessary expenses
  - When no longer a CA, key access will be deactivated immediately
- Keywatcher is an automated key filing and tracking system that allows staff members to access keys by code and fingerprint – CAs may be issued a unique identifier to access keys in Keywatcher.

• Distribute campus handouts/flyers and department materials in a timely manner.
• Complete all paperwork and assignments within the expected timeline as outlined by the Greek Housing Coordinator. Mandatory administrative tasks include, but are not limited to: Bi-weekly reports, occupancy reports, Room Condition Reports (RCRs), Townhouse Inspections, Incident Reports (IRs), etc.
• Completes other administrative tasks as assigned.
• As a result of being an RA students will learn to:
  - Explain the importance of completing administrative paperwork in a timely and complete manner.
  - Complete Room Condition Reports, Townhouse Inspections, and Occupancy Reports with accuracy.
  - Create monthly passive programing or community communication materials that support student success.
  - Articulate the role of CAs in maintaining key security.
  - Describe the benefits of serving on a building-specific or departmental committee.

### Commitments beyond the Position

Your direct supervisor must approve any outside commitments, including pre-existing or new employment and/or leadership opportunities (beyond the expected 20 hours/week expectation when you are directly interacting with residents). This includes serving in an elected or appointed organizational leadership position. This is in place because these ‘outside hours’ have been demonstrated to interfere with a CAs ability to be a successful staff member. This includes the following limitations:
Due to its focus on relationships and customer service within your building, you may work up to 20 hours at the service desk. This is a separate position called “Desk Assistant,” paid hourly, and supervised by the Customer Service Representative of that building/area.

If choosing to work outside our residential communities (not at a service desk), you may work up to 10 hours per week.
- If choosing to work inside and outside our residential communities, you may work up to 10 hours outside the residence halls and up to 10 hours as a Desk Assistant.
- To honor academic commitments, if you are participating in a for-credit internship, practicum, student teaching, etc, you may ‘work’ up to 20 hours per week (internship and any employment hours must be equal to or less than 20 hours per week).

The goal of this component of the position description is to allow RAs to participate in academic for-credit opportunities, on and off-campus employment (outside the residence halls), or to work as a Desk Assistant in our residential communities for a collective total of no more than 20 hours a week. For example, you could work 4 hours as a DA, the CRWC for 10 hours, and have an internship for 6 hours every week. CAs will submit their schedule of classes and other commitments outside of the position to their supervisor one week before classes begin each semester. As a reminder, University of Houston students can not work more than 20 hours per week during Fall and Spring semesters.

Note: Pending a CAs performance, their supervisor may limit any of the above hours (DA, on or off-campus employment, and/or for-credit opportunities) until the staff member’s performance improves.

**Required Events**
- Fully participate in the Fall and Spring RA training programs/sessions.
  - Fall Training begins Monday, July 22 2013, lasts a maximum of five business days, and generally goes from 8am-7pm daily, with days that may be longer or shorter.
  - Additional training presence may be required from August 5, 2013 until the first day of classes – this will be decided by the staff and Residence Life Coordinator during the July training.
  - Spring Training is typically the 1st week prior to school starting in January (tentatively Monday Jan 6th, 2014)
- Assists in the selection of the 2014-2015 CA/RA Staff.
  - The Group Selection Process is 1-3 full days in mid-February 2014 (committee will choose dates)
  - Individual CA interviews will occur over two weeks in early February 2014 (subject to change based upon applicant numbers).
- Prepare, advertise for, and lead community meetings (at minimum a few per semester.)
- All CA’s are also required to work/attend the following events. Dates will be provided by the end of training each semester.
  - Frontier Fiesta
  - Family Weekend
  - Cougar Preview
  - Welcome Week
- All CA’s will be required to be on duty the weeks of Homecoming, Halloween, and Frontier Fiesta.

**EVALUATION**
Formal evaluations are conducted bi-yearly by the Greek Housing Coordinator with input from students, other CA’s, and Student Housing and Residence Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority student affairs educators. Performance while serving as a Student Housing and Residential Life and Center for Fraternity and Sorority student staff educator will be used to determine eligibility to be rehired for the following year.

**COMPENSATION**
This position is contracted through Student Housing and Residential Life with the following compensation:
- CAs are provided one double room space for the duration of appointment located within the townhouse occupied by the origination which they are a member (space to be assigned based upon community needs).
  - It is expected CAs live in their assigned space throughout the duration of the position.
  - The CA will work with their supervisor to select and place a roommate for this double room.
• Resident Assistants shall receive a compensation package that includes a space in a double room and a meal plan. Board is available only when dining facilities are open to residents.
  o Meal Plan – Staff members are provided a meal plan and are expected to use this plan during the course of an academic semester to build relationships with residents who live in their community.
  o NOTE: Compensation in the form of housing and board is excluded from income subject to taxes as long as your position requires you live on the premises, housing is furnished for the convenience of the university and for a substantial non-compensatory business reason, and it is a condition of employment necessitated by the proper performance of duties (SAMs 03.D.06).
• When on-campus dining options are closed (for the entire day), Student Housing and Residential Life staff or the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life will provide food and/or remuneration for CAs on Duty.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

• Upon termination of the position, all necessary paperwork must be completed.
• If a CA chooses to resign, they will write a letter of resignation and give it to their supervisor.
• Failure to follow this document, the requirements or the direction of a CA’s supervisor will result in disciplinary action up to and including early termination.
• Should a CAs position be terminated (by the department or CA) prior to the end of the period of employment, that individual will work with the Greek Housing Coordinator to determine the most suitable on campus housing location. CA rent will be pro-rated accordingly.
• Any Community Assistant can be terminated for violation of University of Houston or Student Housing and Residence Life or Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life policy or public law at any time deemed necessary.
  o It is the CAs responsibility to meet with their direct supervisor to determine an appropriate housing re-assignment and to schedule an appointment to return CA supplies/materials and check out of their current assignment.
  o CAs also are financially responsible for any unreturned items and, if applicable, an improper check out fee – charges will be posted to the students account
  o If a CA is removed from their position, they have an opportunity to appeal the decision in writing within three business days from termination. Appeals can be submitted to the Associate Director of Student Housing and Residence Life and the Director of the Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life.
  o Community Assistants who resign or are terminated from the position are subject to penalties associated with the departmental purchase of a meal plan. Meal plans are non-transferable, as such, resignation or termination of the position may result in the former employee being charged the remaining pro-rated amount of their meal plan. In the case that a former employee resigns or is terminated from the position and chooses to live off campus, the former employee may be subject to normal housing penalties associated with breaking the housing agreement.

The information below indicates basic responsibilities and expectations of all Community Assistants at The University of Houston. Upon selection, you will be asked to sign an agreement stating you understand and agree to these items.

• I understand the CA position begins on Monday, July 22, 2013 and automatically terminates on May 12, 2014.
• I accept the duties of the position and will perform them as outlined.
• I agree to accept additional duties as directed in training or meetings or by my direct supervisor, not explicitly listed in this document.
• If I have any individual needs or accommodations that would restrict me from performing any part of the CA duties, I have already requested these needs in writing with my direct supervisor for next year. I understand CA duties do require some physical work that would include climbing up to flights of stairs, walking between buildings, and lifting objects.