

## **Peer Mentor Position Description 2009-2010**

### **General Statement of Duties**

Peer Mentors are live-in, part-time, student staff members within the First Year Experience residence halls. Peer Mentors work to support first year students in their transition to college life through academic success mentoring, an in-hall curriculum, participation in opening, First Week activities, engaging students in campus life and connecting them to academic departments, and supporting the overall mission of the First Year Experience.

### **Supervision Received**

Peer Mentors report to and work closely with the Residential Learning Graduates (RLG) and the First Year Experience Specialists (FYES). The RLGs report directly to a First Year Experience Specialist (FYES) who provide the overall leadership to all RFYE staff. The Residence Director, Assistant Residence Director(s), and specific Academic Partners may provide functional supervision to the Peer Mentors. The specifics of this arrangement will be clearly stated to each individual Peer Mentor depending on cluster placement.

### **Contract Period**

The Peer Mentor position is a one-year student leadership opportunity. The contract period is for one full academic year (consecutive fall and spring semesters). The contract period includes all training periods. All Peer Mentor staffs are required to be in-residence and to participate fully in all training and operational exercises, which commence prior to the opening of the halls. Peer Mentors are expected to stay through the last day of classes in the fall and spring semesters.

Over the course of an academic year, Peer Mentors work an average of 15 hours per week. However, some periods of time will require greater staffing demands (such as training, opening day, First Week, Weekend trips and initiatives, and special events).

### **Compensation**

The Peer Mentor position is valued at \$4,465 for the 2009-2010 academic year. Peer Mentors will receive a double-single surcharge waiver and the remainder as a cash stipend totaling \$3,915. The cash stipend for Peer Mentors is broken down as follows:

- ❑ \$7.25 per hour for 15 hours/week during the academic year
- ❑ \$7.25 per hour for 30 hours/week for 2 weeks during fall training, Opening/Welcome Week, and spring training periods.
- ❑ The total cash stipend for the 2000-10 academic year is \$3,915.

If a Peer Mentor is granted a Work-Study Award, the Award must be used to fund their Peer Mentor stipend.

### **Housing Assignment**

Peer Mentors are provided their housing assignment in a First Year Residence Hall at the time of hire. This assignment is often based on matching the Peer Mentor's academic interests with a theme, RAP, or other program. When necessary, the University has a practice of relocating programs and activities, which may impact a Peer Mentor's placement. If this occurs, the Peer Mentor will be notified prior to the start of the academic year of their reassignment to a different room, building or area.

## Requirements

- ❑ Peer Mentors must be University undergraduate students enrolled in degree granting programs. A 2.75 cumulative GPA is required at the time of application and commencement of duties, however a 3.00 cumulative GPA or higher is preferred. Peer Mentors must maintain a 2.75 semester and cumulative GPA in order to remain in their position. Residence Life will review each Peer Mentor's semester and cumulative grade point average at the end of every semester.
- ❑ Peer Mentors must be free of judicial sanctions and uphold the University's *Student Code of Conduct* at the time of application and throughout employment.
- ❑ At the time of application, Peer Mentors must have lived in a residence hall for at least one full semester at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- ❑ Peer Mentors will view the position as their primary employment. University policy allows students to work a maximum of 20 hours per week on campus; the Peer Mentor position accounts for 15 of those hours. During employment as a Peer Mentor, second jobs, whether on or off campus, may not exceed 10 hours. Second jobs and/or internships may only be undertaken after consultation with and permission from the Peer Mentor's supervisor.
- ❑ Peer Mentors may not be enrolled in more than 18 credits per semester unless permission is granted by their supervisor.
- ❑ In order to hold this position, Peer Mentors must be eligible for student payroll. If a Peer Mentor is not a U.S. citizen and does not hold an F1 or J1 Visa, s/he is most likely not eligible for student payroll. For questions regarding employment status, Peer Mentors should contact the International Programs Office or Student Payroll.

## Training

- ❑ Peer Mentors are required to participate in Peer Mentor Training and Orientation Programs in August and January. In addition, Peer Mentors may be required to attend periodic trainings throughout the semester that are facilitated by Residence Life and/or Academic Partners.
- ❑ Peer Mentors will participate in further in-service training as determined by the First Year Experience Specialist, Residential Learning Graduate, Academic Partners, Residence Director, or Assistant Residence Director.

## Performance Management

Supervisors will work with Peer Mentors to support individual goals and job performance. At the beginning of each semester, Peer Mentors will meet with their supervisor on an individual and/or all-staff basis to review the job description, establish goals, and outline expectations for the semester. Throughout the semester, a component of staff meetings and 1:1 meetings will be to assess progress and performance. At the end of the Fall semester, a formal, mid-year, evaluation is conducted for each Peer Mentor and focuses on the Peer Mentor's job performance and leadership development. At the end of the Spring semester, an end-of-the-year evaluation is conducted and focuses on the Peer Mentor's strengths and areas of growth, as well as any progress to date.

## Discipline

As progress and performance is evaluated, Peer Mentors who are not meeting expectations may receive a verbal or written warning, probation, or termination of employment depending on the situation. Peer Mentors should become familiar with the document, *PM Discipline Sanctions*, to be aware of disciplinary procedures.

## **POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Academic Success Mentoring**

The primary responsibility of Peer Mentors is to develop mentoring relationships with first year students. Academic Success Mentoring is defined as providing students with assistance in areas such as time management, study skills, organization, test-taking skills, study group strategies, understanding a syllabus, using internet systems (ie: OWL, SPIRE, UMail, etc). Additionally, a critical part of Academic Mentoring is connecting first year students with academic resources including faculty/instructors, advisors, tutors, help centers, study locations, libraries, etc.

Peer Mentors will spend a minimum of two hours per week mentoring students in their cluster. In addition, each Peer Mentor will hold five regularly scheduled office hours for academic mentoring in the Residential Academic Success Center (RASC) each week. The RASC serves as the office for the Peer Mentor staff of each cluster, so in addition to academic mentoring, office time can be used for program design and planning, communication with faculty members, administrative tasks, and other job-related duties.

### **Academic Initiatives**

Peer Mentors will work collaboratively with other PMs to fulfill the programming expectations outlined in the *RFYE In-Hall Curriculum*. These programs/initiatives aim to provide students with access to resources, opportunities to connect to faculty and instructors in an informal atmosphere, and assistance with overcoming daily challenges in the course of their personal and academic development. Programs/initiatives include, but are not limited to the following: Faculty Chats, Study Groups, Workshops, Theme-based Programs, Academic or Theme-based Bulletin Boards, and Trips. Trips are designed to bring students to an on- or off-campus location where they can further explore the cultural, educational, and social offerings of colleges, universities, towns, and cities in Massachusetts and the Northeast. Each Peer Mentor typically attends one of these trips per year, which may occur on a Saturday or Sunday.

Peer Mentors are responsible for maintaining regular communication with their supervisor about program planning and implementation, including advanced requests for necessary funding.

### **Community Development & Policies**

Peer Mentors should be a visible, active and positive presence in the residence hall community. They are expected to work individually and collaboratively to help first year students experience a positive transition to UMass Amherst and to assist in the creation of an inclusive, academically-focused community. Working with the Resident Assistant staff, Peer Mentors will actively engage first year students in early arrival programming, opening day, and First Week events. Peer Mentors should also regularly attend residence hall programmatic events and community initiatives sponsored by the Peer Mentor Staff, Resident Assistant Staff, House Council, Community Leaders, Academic Partners, Residence Life, and other campus agencies.

Peer Mentors should role model respect for University policy and respond to community concerns when needed. Though Peer Mentors are not “Policy Enforcers”, a Peer Mentor will be expected to role model appropriate community standards in his/her/hir personal behavior at all times. As employees of Housing Services, Peer Mentors are expected to obey all Massachusetts

**(Community Development & Policies continued)**

State Laws regarding alcohol and controlled substances. Any evidence of underage drinking or of controlled substance use by a Peer Mentor will result in automatic dismissal from the position. Furthermore, Peer Mentors, as employees of Housing Services, must contact the appropriate Residence Life staff members should he/she/ze witness any inappropriate student conduct. Peer Mentors should familiarize themselves with the policies of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Housing Services, and individual floor Community Agreements, and be prepared to engage students in conversation about acceptable community standards.

As a responsible community member, Peer Mentors are also expected to react appropriately to crisis situations as outlined in the document, *Peer Mentor Role in Crisis Situations*. The primary responsibilities of a Peer Mentor in crisis situations are implementing safety measures and making appropriate referrals. This requires Peer Mentors to be able to access contact information of Residence Life Senior Staff, RAs on-duty, On-Call Staff, and critical campus resources, such as UMPD, Health Services, Mental Health Services, Rape Crisis Hotline, and Public Safety.

**Meetings**

Peer Mentors are expected to attend all staff meetings. The major functions of Peer Mentor staff meetings are to maintain communication channels between staff members, foster a forum for problem solving and collaboration, engage in additional training experiences, and provide support and feedback to members. In addition, Peer Mentors will attend a monthly staff meeting for all cluster staff (PMs, RAs and senior staff) to enhance communication and promote group unity. Peer Mentors will also meet with their supervisor in a 1:1 meeting on a bi-weekly basis. All meeting times will be determined at the start of the academic semester, taking into account the academic schedules of Peer Mentors.

**Administrative Duties**

Peer Mentors will be required to complete a variety of administrative duties to enhance the RFYE program. These duties include the following: 1) Assisting with Peer Mentor selection by conducting interviews and information sessions, distributing posters, and nominating residents, 2) Completing assessments of trainings, programs, and procedures, 3) Assisting with RFYE student focus groups and 4) Documenting RASC activity. The First Year Experience Specialist, Residential Learning Graduate, Academic Partners, Residence Director, or Assistant Residence Director may expect other responsibilities and duties.