

# CORE Community Assistant Position Description & Employment Manual

*Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania – Office of Residence Life  
2010 – 2011*

## **Qualifications:**

The CORE Community Assistant position is designed for undergraduate students at Bloomsburg University. CORE CAs must have a cumulative gpa of 2.5 or higher and not be serving on any judicial sanction by the university. They must also have completed 1 full Fall semester as a Community Assistant or Resident Advisor at an institution of higher learning. This includes having participated in a regularly scheduled Fall staff training program. AHDs must be able to work with a diverse population of students and professional employees. They must also be comfortable working with a variety of campus offices and University leaders.

## **Application Process:**

Potential CORE CA applicants must indicate their interest in the CORE CA position when the “Request for Rehire” applications are distributed to staff. CORE CAs may not be enrolled for student teaching credit or for internships of more than six credits. CORE CAs may hold a second position on or off campus, however the hours that they commit to this secondary position is limited to 15 hrs per week and must be pre-approved by professional staff.



# CORE CA Job Expectations: Core Constituencies

The emblem you see to the right represents the vision for the work that we do in the residence halls and apartment communities. The words in the outer circle represent the department's core values: service, caring, respect, dedication, integrity, inclusive. These words – and the type of effort and energy directed towards our students – encompass the type of philosophical orientation we expect from ourselves and all staff members associated with the Office of Residence Life.

The words in the middle circle – our students, our campus, our history and our future – reflects the areas that we try to honor as we carry out our mission of service to others.

As you begin your term with us, you should always bear in mind our core values; how you carry out your position, how you interact with others, how you build relationships all connects back to this foundation. Remember: we are here to serve our students; their success provides the basis upon which we measure all else.



**The main function of your position in residence life is to build relationships.** There are a number of individuals and groups you are expected to build these relationships with. A sample of these include:

- **Students:** First and foremost, all staff are here to serve our students. The growth, development and overall positive experience of our students is of the highest importance. Students should feel comfortable approaching any staff member at any time. Although you may be assigned to a particular wing or floor, staff are expected to go beyond this and seek to build relationships with all students who reside in the residence hall/apartment complex.
- **Families:** We cannot forget that families are almost always a major source of support and encouragement for our students. As such, we are obligated to our students' families. When family members have questions, concerns or comments it is our duty to provide the time and attention necessary to addressing these matters.
- **Fellow Staff:** Staff should fully understand that they are regarded as *peers* to their fellow staff. As such, staff are expected to build positive, supportive relationships with each other. Efforts should also be undertaken to provide a healthy mentoring partnership and supportive team learning environment for newer community assistants. All staff are expected to approach management of the residence hall/apartment complex as a team. Collaboration, information sharing and planning are all elemental to a successful team approach.
- **Custodial & Maintenance Staff:** Custodial & Maintenance staff play a vital role in the residence halls and apartment complexes– a role far beyond that of a “housekeeper.” Residence Life student staff are to get to know these individuals and assure them of your support and willingness to discuss any issues that may arise.
- **University Police:** The University Police play a vital role in the safety and security of our halls and apartments. The police officers practice “community policing.” Therefore, you will see uniformed officers walking through your hallways and stopping in your lobbies. Get to know these individuals; make sure that they get to know you. Building positive relations with all BUPD officers allows us to work together more effectively thereby allowing us to serve our students more effectively.
- **Residence Life Central Office Staff:** Undergraduate and graduate staff should understand that they are part of a larger picture. The Office of Residence Life is here to serve all student staff as well as everyone who reside in our halls and apartments. It is important that student staff build relationships with all members of the central office staff; CAs should be well versed in the various roles and

responsibilities that each staff member holds and the vast resources that are available to them and their students.

## CORE CA Job Expectations: Ethical Expectations of Staff

### **Responsibility to Students**

- I will treat students as individuals with dignity, worth and the ability to make choices for themselves. I will assist students in becoming productive, responsible community members and citizens. I am concerned for the welfare of all students and will work for constructive change on their behalf.
- I understand that students will look to me for ideas and how to interact within the university and the greater community. Therefore, I will model positive academic, interpersonal and social behaviors, treat all students fairly, and show and teach respect.
- I will conduct all business and personal affairs in a manner which will elicit respect from residents, peers, supervisors, and those I come in contact with.

### **Responsibility to Myself and Fellow Staff**

- I know that others look to me for guidance and, therefore, my competence is essential. I will learn from initial and ongoing training, constantly striving to better myself and my skills, and be well informed about services available to students. I will commit myself to my own academic growth and encourage others to do the same. I will perform the function of my position consistently and take responsibility for my actions. I will strive to understand my limits and acknowledge and attempt to improve my weaknesses.
- I will offer and accept constructive criticism clearly and in a positive manner so that was as a staff and department may improve on performance. I will try to anticipate obstacles – both personally and through my position – and view them as challenges through which I will grow personally and professionally.
- I will not assume, condemn, or jump to conclusions and will try to get all possible facts before drawing conclusions.
- I will work as a team member, maintain open communication with other staff, confront and/or report any misconduct amongst staff members, be dependable and be part of the staff support system.
- I will be consistent, respectful, and supportive of other staff members. I will treat others as I wish to be treated. I will not undermine the authority of other staff in the presence of students/others.

### **Responsibility to the Office of Residence Life and Bloomsburg University**

- I will be supportive of the position, the residence life office and Bloomsburg University. I understand that if I act in a way that is unethical or inappropriate, it not only undermines my credibility, but also that of each and every member of the Residence Life Staff. Therefore, I will represent my position and the Office of Residence Life positively and professionally.
- I will be truthful in my interactions with others throughout the campus. In those interactions, I will be forthcoming with all information I possess; I will role model open-mindedness and encourage the acceptance and celebration of diversity.



# CORE CA Job Expectations:

## Harassment & Sexual Harassment for Student Supervisors

### *Harassment*

**Definition:** Harassment is defined as follows: "...badgering, annoying, stalking, threatening or otherwise repeatedly disturbing another individual by physical, verbal, mental, racial...or other means is prohibited" (The Pilot, 2008-2009). Harassment that occurs "via communication" (i.e. through electronic communication, web-based communication or third party communication) is deemed as serious as harassment that occurs "in person." Examples of harassment can include:

- Following someone
- Inappropriate physical contact (i.e. striking, biting)
- Directing inappropriate/annoying/threatening behavior towards an individual due to his or her race, gender, ethnic background, physical and/or mental health ability, religious affiliation and/or other protected class.

**Departmental Stance:** Whereas CORE CAs occupy positions of authority with students, it is expected that CORE CAs will not engage in any form of harassment OR anything that could be construed as harassment by a recipient. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals under a CORE CA's **direct** supervision or authority (i.e. one's wing, floor, apartment complex) AND individuals under a CORE CA's **indirect** authority (i.e. students living on campus in any residential facility). CORE CAs are also required to be attentive to conduct which may be perceived by others (whether accurate or otherwise) as harassment.

### *Sexual Harassment*

**Definition:** Sexual Harassment is defined as follows: "...unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature" (Hendrickson, 1999). Additional elements of sexual harassment relative to the CORE CA position include, but are not limited to, continued, unwanted advances that could be construed by a reasonable person as sexual or suggestive in nature. This can include direct verbal advances, direct physical advances, advances via third party and/or advances via electronic means of communication. It is also important to understand that an individual may not intend to engage in sexual harassment; however, the recipient of the behavior may interpret the behavior as harassing in nature.

**Departmental Stance:** Whereas CORE CAs occupy positions of authority with undergraduate students and graduate students, it is expected that CORE CAs will not engage in any form of sexual harassment OR anything that could be construed as sexual harassment by a recipient. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals under a CORE CA's **direct** supervision or authority (i.e. one's wing/floor/apartment complex) AND individuals under a CORE CA's **indirect** authority (i.e. students living on campus in any residential facility). CORE CAs are also required to be attentive to conduct which may be perceived by others (whether accurate or otherwise) as sexual harassment.

Additionally, it is inappropriate for CORE CAs to engage in consensual relations with individuals under a CORE CA's **direct** authority. Even though the relationship may be consensual, the power differential remains; furthermore, the possibility of *disparate impact* as a result of this relationship is far too great to permit. CORE CAs who have a relationship with a potential resident prior to their assuming the CORE CA position are to disclose this relationship such that appropriate placement can be provided.

### *Disciplinary Action*



All allegations of harassment or sexual harassment will be investigated. Based on the investigation, the Office of Residence Life will determine the appropriate outcome. Outcomes can include, but are not limited to, termination of the employment contract, reassignment within the department, and employment probation.

## CORE CA Job Expectations: Personnel Review Process

All CORE CA staff employed by the Office of Residence Life will receive regular informal and formal reviews. Informal guidance will occur through regular meetings with the supervisor. During these informal conversations, supervisors will offer feedback regarding issues, questions or matters that the CORE CA may have already addressed in his or her residential area. The purpose of these conversations is to provide a forum for continuous improvement. As such they should not be viewed as disciplinary in nature; rather, these conversations should be regarded as opportunities to progress one's knowledge and skill in a particular area and are part of any good supervisor/CORE CA relationship.

Formal evaluations will occur with graduate staff once per semester in accordance with the department's evaluation schedule. These evaluations consist of receiving written feedback. A supervisor can request additional formal evaluations should circumstances warrant. A written summary of the evaluation will be provided to the CORE CA and included in his or her personnel file.

### Progressive Discipline Procedures

From time to time, CORE CAs may exhibit performance or social or ethical conduct issues which require a response beyond a simple conversation or corrective guidance. Should an instance of this nature arise, possible procedures can include, but are not limited to:

- **Oral Discussion** – The goal of this procedure is to talk with the CORE CA regarding an area of concern. Although a simple approach, the purpose is to create lasting behavioral change and/or address a current or past issue. The supervisor, at his or her discretion, may elect to write a letter to the CORE CA summarizing the discussion.
- **Coaching Review** - The goal of this procedure is to improve performance in one or more areas of the CORE CA position. Often, coaching meetings address performance that has not necessarily *breached* expectations but is still not *in line with* expectations. Coaching reviews will result in a letter to the CORE CA summarizing the discussion along with the intended plan for improvement.
- **Disciplinary Review** – A disciplinary review is used when a CORE CA has demonstrated poor performance or poor social or ethical choices. This meeting is conducted with the CORE CA's supervisor; the supervisor may also elect to have another professional staff member present. However, the issue is not so severe as to warrant possible probation, reassignment or termination. Documentation will be provided to the CORE CA along with objectives for improvement. The result of the disciplinary review process is often a "written reprimand," which is a summary of the issue under review, a summary of the conversation, and includes objectives for improvement.
- **Administrative Review** – An administrative review is used in more serious and/or cumulative situations. The administrative review process allows for multiple professionals (two or more) to review all documentation related to the particular CORE CA and/or the particular matter in question. Documents can include formal evaluations, coaching letters, written reprimand letters etc. Additionally, the CORE CA and his or her supervisor will meet with the review members to discuss and clarify the matter. The review members are responsible for the final decision as to the CORE CA's employment status. Decisions can include, but are not limited to, termination, employment reassignment or employment probation.

## Progressive Discipline Outcomes

As noted above, there are several types of disciplinary outcomes that could be used when a CORE CA performs poorly or engages in poor social or ethical choices. All progressive discipline outcomes include formal, written documents provided to the CORE CA in person; additionally, all documents related to CORE CA performance and/or disciplinary matters are included in the CORE CA's personnel file.



Progressive discipline outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- **Written Reprimand** – a clear statement of wrongdoing. However, the behavior or performance in question is not so egregious as to warrant probation, reassignment or termination
- **Employment Probation** – a clear statement of wrongdoing coupled with a timeframe during which the CORE CA's performance will be more closely monitored. Should further performance or social or ethical issues occur, the CORE CA can face reassignment or termination.
- **Reassignment** – Should the professional staff decide that a CORE CA lacks the ability to successfully discharge his or her duties (as evidenced by poor performance evaluations, multiple oral discussions regarding performance and possibly more serious personnel measures), reassignment may be an option. However, reassignment is entirely contingent upon departmental needs and/or departmental vacancies.
- **Termination** – a canceling of the employment agreement initiated by the Office of Residence Life. Where reasonable, CORE CAs will have an opportunity to respond to allegations which may result in termination. However, the Office of Residence Life reserves the right to terminate a CORE CA should the continued employment and/or presence of said individual be deleterious to the efficient and safe operation of their assigned residence hall, apartment complex or larger University community. The Office of Residence Life also reserves the right to suspend a CORE CA pending a full investigation of any charges or allegations which are sufficiently severe so as to possibly result in termination.

***It should be noted that, whenever possible, Disciplinary Outcomes will follow the stated outcomes progression. However, there may be instances where the job performance or social/ethical poor choices are egregious enough to go directly to one of the more severe outcomes including job termination.***

## CORE CA Job Expectations: [Living Learning Communities](#)

The concept of Living Learning Communities is shaped by the collective mission of the University and the Residence Life Office. Integrating academic programs, cultural activities, interpersonal relations, and promoting intellectual growth and social responsibility among students both in and outside of the classroom are the essential components of LLCs. LLCs create deeper connections with the institution and peers, thus leading students to assume a more active role in their education and the community.

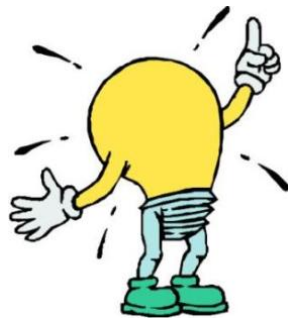
LLCs strive to promote student success by encouraging faculty involvement in the undergraduate residential experience. By integrating faculty in the residence halls, students & staff develop a sense of interconnectedness and a mutual concern for the enrichment of their collegiate experience. In recognition of the diverse learning patterns of students, LLCs create a natural environment in which students can engage in intellectually stimulating conversation and activity based on their area of interest and future career goals.

**All residential staff are expected to support the mission and various initiatives set forth by the Living Learning Communities**



## CORE CA Job Expectations: [Staff Academic Policy](#)

- A CORE CA must remember that as a student and as a role model s/he must be committed to doing well academically. In order to reinforce this, the Residence Life Staff will support the academic mission of the University and will require staff members to maintain a good academic standing. A CORE CA must maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA in order to remain in good academic standing.
- A CORE CA whose cumulative GPA falls below a 2.5 will be placed on ACADEMIC JOB PROBATION for one grading period. ACADEMIC JOB PROBATION is defined as a final warning status which provides a staff member one semester to achieve a verified semester GPA above a 2.5. If the staff member fails to earn a 2.5 the second consecutive grading period, they will be removed immediately from the position.



- Any staff member placed on ACADEMIC JOB PROBATION will be required to meet with their supervisor to discuss the past semester and to develop strategies to enhance academic performance. The supervisor may require a periodic report on his/her academic performance throughout the probationary grading period.
- The Residence Life Staff emphasizes the importance of each student's academic success, and this academic standing policy is enacted to provide support or time away from the position to focus on studies. In addition, any staff member who feels that holding a residence hall position is hindering his/her academic progress is encouraged to consider working with their supervisor to develop academic and time management strategies to enhance his/her performance.