Academic Peer Advocate (APA) 2019-2020 Academic Year

Position Description
Academic Peer Advocates (APAs) are undergraduate members of the University Housing-Residence Life staff. APAs provide an essential role in the academic success of our residents. Academic Peer Advocates work in unison with Resident Assistants, Hall Directors, and other staff to create a positive living-learning environment focusing on personal development and academic success.

The APA position requires an individual acutely sensitive to the needs of students who can be flexible yet reliable regarding time demands; can perform essential administrative tasks; is sensitive to diversity; and has a genuine desire to be of service to others. The Academic Peer Advocate role is to support the mission of University Housing in connecting residents to campus resources supporting student success.

The APA position is comprised of various responsibilities. Primary among these is performing timely intrusive early warning interventions with residents whenever notice of concern is received and following up to ensure the resident connected with the appropriate resource. These responsibilities will require varied time commitments week to week and APAs are expected to place interventions at the top of their essential “to do” list each week. These time commitments constitute only a part of the time expectations of APAs and are in addition to the informal time to be spent in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, time spent living in the hall, studying, or doing personal business while still being available to respond to the needs of residents. A unique aspect of the Academic Peer Advocate position is a large portion of time commitments are carried out during the evening and weekend hours.

General Responsibilities
I. Academics
   ▪ Assist with Intrusive Early Warning Academic Intervention meetings with residents
   ▪ Perform proactive student outreach when specific intervention opportunities have not been assigned
   ▪ Foster understanding of academic processes for residents (course withdraw dates, registration, academic advisors, etc.)
   ▪ Be a role model and advocate for personal academic success and encourage residents to develop and enhance successful academic skills
   ▪ Collaborate with Living Learning Community initiatives and academic units
   ▪ Assist residents in identifying, understanding, and utilizing University resources dedicated to developing students’ academic success
   ▪ Know University academic and personal support services to effectively serve as a referral agent for residents in need

II. Administrative
   ▪ Prepare and submit accurate weekly report records of intrusive Early Warning Academic interventions
   ▪ Submit administrative paperwork in accordance with supervisor’s expectations
   ▪ Maintain communication with direct supervisor in one on one meetings and through weekly updates
   ▪ Check SIU Carbondale email daily
   ▪ Participate in Fall & Spring Residence Life Staff recruitment and staff selection processes
   ▪ Understand and utilize emergency procedures appropriately
   ▪ Successfully complete semi-annual evaluations each semester of employment
III. Educator
- Demonstrate effective listening and reflection skills
- Demonstrate an accepting inclusive attitude towards all lifestyles, backgrounds, identities, and personalities
- Encourage others to celebrate areas of diversity, inclusivity, multiculturalism, and social justice
- Demonstrate a high level of self-awareness, be aware of personal strengths and areas of improvement
- Engage in open dialogue and share in perspective taking
- Be aware of, own, and represent the rationale for, University, University Housing, and Residence Life policies and procedures
- Know and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct, The Guidebook, and any other University, University Housing, and Residence Life policies

IV. Community Facilitator
- Know and recognize all members of given community
- Maintain and update a physical environment consistent with staff and departmental standards
- Work collaboratively with Resident Assistants and Residence Life staff in your area and across campus

V. Team Member/Role Model
- Demonstrate behavior consistent with departmental and staff expectations including a consistently positive attitude toward university Housing and SIU
- Respect and maintain confidentiality
- Act as an appropriate referral agent for students
- Give and receive feedback from others in an appropriate manner
- Support and recognize own and other building staff
- Act as an appropriate role model for others in managing time, stress, coursework, academic behaviors, and attitude
- Balance academics, personal relationships, and extracurricular activities with APA position
- Support University Housing Leadership Organizations (Area Council, House Leaders, Black Togetherness Organization, Residence Hall Association, National Residence Hall Honorary) efforts, as well as encourage residents to be involved and active participants

VI. Time Commitments
- APAs are expected to be available in their area and visible in their buildings on a regular basis
- Participate in all training, staff meetings and professional development as directed by supervisor or department
- Prepare for traditionally busy weeks of providing intrusive academic interventions by rearranging schedule as necessary, rearranging other activities as needed for these busy weeks
- Additional responsibilities may vary depending on placement and needs of department and/or community
- APAs may, with prior supervisory approval, work outside of the APA role for up to 10 hours per week so long as the commitment to APA expectations maintains the highest priority and is not compromised by any outside employment
VII. Programming/Events
- Assist as needed with campus-wide event efforts including, but not limited to Community Development Model, open houses, scholarship weekends, New Student Orientations, and Dawgs Night Out events.
- Assist with University Housing wide initiatives
- Support Saluki Start Up and Week of Welcome programming during the beginning of each semester and support campus wide events throughout year
- Understand and utilize event resources found throughout University Housing
- Advertise support, and assist Living Learning Community and academic initiative events
- Meet the needs and interests of residents through intentional academic events

VIII. Miscellaneous
- Additional meetings or mandatory events will be scheduled. It is an expectation APAs will attend these events
- Perform other duties as assigned
- Have a cumulative GPA of 2.8 or higher at the time of application and commencement of employment
- Maintain a GPA of 2.5 each semester, including semester before employment
- Remain registered as a full time student (Minimum of 12 undergraduate credit hours per semester, 9 graduate credit hours per semester, and up to 16 hours/semester)
- Be a role model and advocate for personal academic success and encourage residents to develop and enhance successful academic skills
- No incomplete classes/grades at commencement of employment or at the conclusion of each semester while employed

IX. Remuneration
- The APA compensation package provides a single room without charge. Please note APAs do not receive complimentary meal plans.
- In addition, APAs are awarded a $600 pre-tax stipend distributed monthly September through June

IMPORTANT: Accepting an APA position may affect your eligibility for some financial aid. If you are currently receiving financial aid, you should check with your financial aid advisor before accepting an APA position. Historically, students seeking the APAs position purely for financial relief have not been successful.

Qualifications
- Minimum requirements for the Academic Peer Advocate position include:
- 2.8 cumulative GPA and 2.5 semester GPA at the time of application and commencement of employment
- 26 credit hours earned by the time employment begins
- have lived in SIU Housing for at least 2 semesters (fall & spring)
- maintain full-time student status (12 undergraduate credit hours or more or 9 graduate credit hours or more) while employed; and
- remain in good academic, judicial and financial standing with SIU and University Housing
The role of University Housing’s Academic Peer Advocates (APAs) has evolved for the 2019-2020 academic year. The department thoroughly reviewed the APA position including staff expectations, effectiveness of the APA position as assessed through multiple measures, and how these crucial staff best serve students’ needs. The department has refocused the position to center on the core of their role; identifying stressors and removing hurdles to our residents’ success. Director of Housing, Dr. Jon Shaffer’s research of the last ten years has examined the role of residence life staff in providing intrusive academic intervention. These findings, along with other research and the assessed need on our campus, informs the formation and evolution of the APA role. The role has undergone subtle tweaks since its inception but these changes will be the most significant to date. By refocusing and clarifying the APA role, our Resident Assistant (RA) role has also been more clearly defined which will help our residents understand how each role best serves their needs.

The job description and expectations of APA’s performance have been revamped to eliminate redundancies between APAs and RAs. For example, we have removed the programmatic expectations of APAs. APAs will have fewer requirements of their position resulting in a dramatic reduction of the average expected hours worked each week. The APA compensation package has been altered to reflect this reduced time commitment. In addition, APAs will focus their work exclusively in the residence halls where an increase in the use of the early warning system by faculty and staff is expected. University Housing has increased the number of APAs per capita serving in residence halls in anticipation of this greater demand.