Residential Counselor & Women Peer Counselor
First-Year Residential Peer Leader

We at Brown University believe that the experience students receive in the residence hall is integral to their academic, social, intellectual, and personal growth. We believe that student life in the residence hall is not separate from the academic mission of the University, but rather is supportive of students’ total development. The first-year Residential Peer Leader (RPL) is a paraprofessional staff member who works actively to support this philosophy by promoting personal growth, social responsibility, and intellectual development through community-based interactions in a residence hall unit. The unit Co-Counselor team which consists of a Resident Counselor (RC) and Women Peer Counselor (WPC) facilitates this objective.

Expectations

The Residential Peer Leader is expected to:

- Work on all levels with the Community Director and unit Co-Counselor staff members; commonly referred to as “Co-Cs,” to ensure the efficient operation of first-year living units.
- Respond to the personal, social and academic needs of first-year residential students.
- Facilitate an environment that fosters respect and safety and is conducive to academic and social success.
- Act on a commitment to diversity and pluralism, as the living area chooses to implement it.
- Maintain good academic and judicial status.
- Reside in campus housing throughout the academic year and be available to assist with the daily operations of a residential environment.

JOB SUMMARY:

Resident Counselor (RC):
In 1971, the RC program was founded in response to the merging of Brown University and Pembroke College. RCs are generalists and receive comprehensive training on a range of skills, which include active listening, crisis intervention, mediation, conflict resolution, promoting pluralism and diversity, and building community. They are a vital link in the network of support available to new students.

Women Peer Counselor (WPC):
The WPC Program was developed in 1983 by members of B.A.R.S. (Brown Against Rape and Sexism) and the Office of Student Life. WPCs counsel women and men at Brown on issues such as sexism, gender issues, contraception and safer sex, eating concerns, sexuality, relationships, assertiveness, sexual harassment and assault. WPCs may also offer cooperative programming with the Sarah Doyle Women’s Center, the Third World Center, and the LGBTQ Resource Center.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Rising Senior, Junior, or Sophomore status.
- Previous mentoring, peer leadership, and programming experience preferred but not required. A positive “can do” attitude and proven ability to follow through on assignments. The ability to be open-minded and receptive to policies and procedures that are constantly reviewed and altered to enhance the services offered to students residing in campus facilities. Creativity and problem solving skills.
- Good academic and judicial standing.

COMPENSATION:

- Transferable managerial skills to “real world” career opportunities, leadership development, extensive training in the areas of student development, and an opportunity to work as part of a talented team.
- Stipend $2,450.00 per year
**Job Description**

**ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES:**
RPLs in first-year areas will:

- Support the mission and purpose of the Office of Residential Life.
- Support the mission and purpose of the two unit based residential programs: Resident Counselor (RC) and Women Peer Counselor (WPC).
- Serve as an information liaison between residents, the Community Director, and appropriate University offices.
- Be the contact person during critical periods should any University official or office need assistance in responding to residents’ needs (i.e., setting up a residence hall meeting during campus crisis for rumor control or student support).
- Provide peer support and leadership to residents by referring students to the appropriate campus resources when situations arise that are beyond the expertise of the RPL role.
- Adhere to guidelines regarding confidentiality and disclosure as defined during leadership development activities (i.e., summer/spring training, in-service workshops, etc).
- Work with the Associate Director, Community Director, RPL colleagues and Representatives to use consistent measures in addressing residential community issues.

**FACILITY MANAGEMENT:**
RPLs in first-year areas will:

- Conduct weekly “Facility Checklist” in the residence hall and report routine maintenance issues to the Community Director, Department of Facilities Management, and the Office of Residential Life.
- In conjunction with the Community Director, work with the Office of Residential Life to develop a location for recreational space in their respective living area.
- Assist in conducting Health and Safety inspections.

**COMMUNITY BUILDING:**
RPLs in first-year areas will establish a credible, visible presence in the unit and residence hall in the following ways:

- Assess and identify the interests of residents.
- Assist in the development of community standards.
- Take action to address inappropriate behavior.
- Promote positive and productive relationships among residents.
- Facilitate conflict mediation.
- Attend and support Faculty Fellow programming initiatives.
- Encourage residents to safely participate in traditional and campus-wide Brown events (i.e., Homecoming, Parents weekend, thematic months, spring weekend, and commencement exercises to name a few).
- Develop a crime prevention/safety awareness program for the living area.

**PROGRAMMING:**
During the fall and spring semester RPLs in first-year areas will:

- Work as an individual and cooperatively with the Community Director, Co-Cs, and other RPLs in the region on programs that foster community, facilitate adjustment and transition issues, endorse academic enrichment, and emphasize learning opportunities outside of the classroom.
- Effectively develop, plan, organize, market and execute programs that adhere to the following areas:
  - Civic Engagement
  - ISMS
  - Academic
  - Wellness
- Facilitate unit meetings throughout the academic year (i.e., first unit meetings during Orientation Week).
TIME COMMITMENT & AVAILABILITY:

Residential Peer Leadership Training:
- RPLs must attend two extensive training sessions during the academic year. The first training session takes place during the summer and the second session will occur prior to the start of spring semester. You will be committed to remain in the Providence area through the first day of classes during each semester.

Note: These dates are tentative and may be adjusted based on the need of the program under which you are hired:

Summer Training begins: Wednesday, August 20, 2008
Spring Training begins: Friday, January 16, 2009

Staff Development (In-service Training):
- RPLs must attend two staff development sessions throughout the academic year.

Note: These dates are tentative and may be adjusted based on the need of the program under which you are hired:

Sunday, October 19, 2008
Sunday, March 8, 2009

Meetings:
- RPLs are required to meet weekly with the Community Director in their designated area. In addition, RPLs must attend a semester review meeting with Faculty Fellows and the Community Director.
- RPLs will meet biweekly with the RC or WPC Representative.
- Please be advised that based on the needs of the program under which you are hired, you may be required to participate in additional meetings, training sessions and programs that require use of your time.

Committees:
- In an effort to compliment the objectives of the Brown University mission, RPLs will have an opportunity to serve on committees that partner them with professionals in the Offices of Residential Life, Community Directors, and RPL Representatives. These committees will include but not be limited to: RPL training and development, RPL recruitment and selection, RPL appreciation and recognition, reviewing, and implementing a philosophy for residential living experiences, and cooperatively working with faculty to insure academic success.

Length of Service:
- The tenure of the RPL position is an academic term (August – May). If a staff member desires to remain for an additional term he or she can re-apply through an abridged version of the RPL selection process.
- RPLs are required to remain on-campus until Residence Halls close at the end of each semester (fall and spring)

Professionalism

A. Guide for Ethical Conduct and Choices
RPLs in first-year areas are expected to:
- Be aware of their potentially influential position and to not misuse this position in any way, remaining attentive and empathetic to the vulnerability a resident may experience in seeking their assistance on a range of personal issues.
- Not pursue, develop, or engage in any inappropriate emotional and/or physical relationship with your residents.
- Not obtain drugs or alcohol for or engage in the consumption of drugs or alcohol with residents.

B. Confidentiality and Disclosure
RPLs in first-year areas are expected to:
- Inform students of the nature of confidentiality and responsibility in disclosing relevant information in their role as a paraprofessional.
- Follow guidelines of confidentiality when sharing information with Community Directors, RPL colleagues, RPL Representatives, Program Directors, and administrators in the Office of Residential Life and Office of Student Life.
- Inform professional staff of any situation in which a student may be at risk of hurting him/herself or others.
- Refer all contacts from parents, the media, and any other non-Brown staff member to the Community Director.
Not use student information/data for any purposes not related to the RPL position (i.e., electronic SPAM, marketing an event of non-Brown groups, etc).

C. Responsibility and Competence

1. RPLs are responsible for knowing their capacities and limitations. Although the nature of their work may require "peer counseling," they are not professional counselors. Therefore, RPLs will accurately represent their competence and areas of ability. They are expected to make a prompt referral of any resident whose needs may be better served by professional staff.

2. RPLs will be responsible for maintaining a proficient level of competence through ongoing routine review of protocols and procedures with the Community Director.

3. RPLs will discuss serious problems that occur in their area with the Community Director and appropriate professional staff (examples include but are not limited to narcotic use and excessive drinking, academics, worrisome behavior, and possible violations of the Standards of Student Conduct).

4. RPLs will contribute to the integrity and good reputation of the Residential Peer Leadership programs.

5. RPLs should adhere to University policy, and state and federal law.

6. RPLs will work to raise their understanding of differences among students such as those that may be associated with age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic and ethnic/racial background, political or religious affiliation, and disability. It is the RPL’s responsibility to develop an ability to work with all students.

7. RPLs should welcome constructive feedback from their colleagues, their Community Director and professional staff, with the intent of improving work performance.

8. If RPLs learn of misconduct on the part of another staff member, they should constructively address the situation. If such behavior persists or is of a more serious nature, the RPL should notify the Community Director.

9. RPLs are "students first" and should be responsible for attending to their personal and academic well being. If aspects of the residential peer leadership experience become overwhelming, the staff member in conjunction with the Community Director should consider alternative opportunities.