



## Becoming a Resident Assistant



- ★ I'm looking for an exciting leadership opportunity.
- ★ I want to share the experiences I've had working with groups and be a resource to others.
- ★ I am willing to learn more about what it means to work with a diverse population.
- ★ I want to be a member of, and contribute to, a staff team.
- ★ I want to enhance my development as a student and gain experience that will benefit me after college.

### Are you thinking about being a resident assistant?

Before you answer, it is important to realize the lasting impact that this position will have on your future success. This position will give you many new, exciting, and challenging experiences that will enhance the time you spend at Western Connecticut State University. These experiences will give you skills that you will be able to use for the rest of your life.

Should you decide to become a resident assistant, you will be trained in many areas that will enable you to successfully and effectively do your job. You will have the support of the Department of Housing and Residence Life and your professional staff member(s), who will always be there to help and guide you.

Upon graduation, employers will be looking for work experience as well as academic success. Nationally, students who were resident assistants are in high demand in the workforce. RAs are seen as leaders – and that leadership will give you an important edge in separating yourself from others in climbing the ladder to success.

Some famous names who were resident assistants in college include Hillary Rodham Clinton, former First Lady and Secretary of State; Katie Couric, news anchor; Mike Ditka, former head coach of the Chicago Bears; actors Jerry O'Connell, Paul Reiser and Wesley Snipes; and musical artist, Sheryl Crow.

### How do I apply?



Every semester the Department of Residence Life offers information sessions to promote open positions to become an RA. These sessions describe the entire process from application to interviews.



### Minimum Qualifications:

- The Resident Assistant must be a full-time, enrolled student.
- The Resident Assistant must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above at all times.
- The Resident Assistant must not be currently under residential or University disciplinary probation.
- Must have lived on a university campus at least one semester prior to applying.
- Be able to attend all trainings as established by the Department of Housing and Residence Life.
- **Becoming a resident assistant may impact your financial aid package.**

### What is a Resident Advisor (RA)?



★ RAs at WestConn have many different roles. They are peer counselors, community builders, academic guides, programmers, and administrators. RAs spend a significant amount of time getting to know residents as individuals and generating enthusiasm as they bring students together to create floor and hall communities.

★ RAs are responsible for other students, which means that a successful staff member must be sensitive to the needs of many different people. Recognizing differences takes sensitivity, understanding, self-confidence, and strength of character.

★ As residence hall community leaders, RAs encourage residents to respect one another, get involved with floor, hall and area activities, and provide information about campus resources.

- ★ Finally, RAs are expected to be strong team players as members of a residence hall staff. They are expected to display a commitment to the development of an effective hall staff.

### What are the Position Responsibilities?

There is no such thing as a “regular” day for an RA. RAs perform a broad range of tasks and activities. Below is a brief snapshot of RAs’ major areas of responsibility:

- Talk with, get to know, and be available to all students on the floor. Be a good listener.
- Establish a living-learning environment on the floor and within the hall through role modeling, activities and programming.
- Participate in development and advising of floor/hall activities, hall government, and encourage students to become active participants.
- Build a community environment on the floor based on respect, which allows all residents to feel safe, comfortable and included.
- Perform all administrative tasks as defined by the Resident Director. Administrative tasks include things such as: posting informational flyers and bulletin boards, attending bi-weekly one-on-ones, distributing and collecting housing paperwork, completing a program assignment, completing weekly reports, verifying occupancy and assisting with Open House.
- Attend weekly staff meetings.



- Assisting the RD and fellow RAs in officially opening and closing the residence hall
- Understand, explain, enforce and support all Department of Housing & Residence Life and University policies and procedures.
- Maintain a standard of personal conduct commensurate with responsibilities. The Resident Assistant is expected to set an example both in knowing and abiding by all applicable laws and University policies.
- Attend and actively participate in the Fall RA Training and the Spring RA Training.
- Attend and actively participate in all in-services.
- Participate in RA Selection (i.e., recruitment, informational meetings, group process and interviews) as assigned by the Resident Director.

### Other Areas of Responsibility

- Helping to establish an educational environment within the residence community (i.e., noise control, community living, etc.).
- Assisting in advising individual students.
- Acting as a referral source for students to the appropriate university personnel.
- Facilitating, initiating, and implementing community programming.
- Attending events sponsored by the floor, staff, and community.
- Enforcing, supporting, and adhering to the rules and regulations of the University.
- Assisting with general administrative duties (i.e., room selection, lock-outs, RA selection).
- Implementing procedures and enforcing policies relating to the management of the physical aspects of the residence communities (i.e., reporting damage and persons responsible, room inspections, check-in and check-out, etc.).
- Assisting in the processing of judicial forms (i.e., incident reports, complaints forms, warnings, etc.).
- Assisting in research approved by the Housing/Student Affairs Departments (i.e., needs assessment surveys, etc.).
- Disseminating information to residents (i.e., regular floors meetings, bulletin boards, etc.).
- Identifying residents who appear to be experiencing personal or academic difficulties and referring them to an appropriate resource or staff member.



### What are the Benefits of Becoming an RA?

- A valuable learning experience that you will utilize during your years at Western and after you leave the position.



- You will gain experience with your personal interaction with others while building self-confidence and learning more about yourself.
- You will gain insight on effective ways to become a problem solver.
- Time management skills.
- Training in a wide variety of areas that will enable you to effectively perform your duties.
- Public speaking skills.
- The ability to be a positive role model with your peers.
- Attending conferences (when available) that will provide opportunities to further develop your skills within the position.
- Constructive feedback and evaluation of your job performance.
- Leadership experience! A chance to learn new skills or enhance those you already have. Experience for your intended career path; employers know what being a RA means, so it's a great resume builder.
- The Department of Housing and Residence Life also provides housing and a meal plan. RAs live in single rooms. RAs in apartment style housing (Grasso and Pinney) will share an apartment with 2- 4 other students. Currently, these are:
  - WS – Blue 75 Meal plan
  - MT – Platinum Meal plan
- A local phone with voicemail is provided, along with basic cable and internet connection.
- A stipend which is currently set at:
  - WS – \$950.00 per semester
  - MT – \$250.00 per semester
    - *Please note that stipends are paid throughout the semester through the student payroll, and are considered taxable income. To explore possible exemption, please see the Human Resources office in University Hall.*

## Selection Process

### How many positions are available?

It depends. Every year there are different reasons for RAs not returning to the position. Most RAs leave the position because of graduation or a study abroad opportunity. We will not know until early March how many RAs will be rehired. This determines the number of positions for new RAs.

### What is the "group process" part of the application process and how do I prepare for it?

The group process is a series of activities in which you will participate with other candidates. These activities may be based on decision-making, team work and demonstrating leadership style. The best way to prepare for it is not to prepare. Go in with a positive attitude, don't be nervous and be yourself.

### Individual interviews?





Each candidate has an interview with a small group, usually an RD and several current RA candidates. The interview will explore your knowledge of the position, and some of the reasons you may feel you would make a terrific candidate for the job. They are usually about ½ hour in length.



**So, I got the job! 😊**

#### **What if I prefer to work in a specific area?**

It is common for RA applicants to feel this way. If you are not asked about your placement preference during the process, explain your preference at the end of your interview along with your reasoning. The Department of Housing and Residence Life does attempt to match your wishes while also meeting the needs of the department.

#### **When Would I Begin the Position?**

The position begins during 'training period' with the day you're required to move-in/return to campus. If you accept the position offer, you cannot expect to have any other time commitments during the training period. Other time commitments include, but are not limited to: winter or summer session classes, internships, practica, vacations, family weddings, training for other organizations, etc. Training for the fall semester usually begins in mid-August, approximately 2 weeks prior to the start of fall classes.

#### **How will I be able to Maintain Balance between Being an RA and Being a Student?**

Glad you asked! You're a student first and foremost. We're very proud of the fact that the majority of our RAs achieve a 3.0 or higher cumulative grade point average. We also understand that you may also want to be involved in co-curricular activities or hold another job.

If you're interested in participating in co-curricular activities or holding a job outside the RA position, you must talk with your supervisor once hired to determine if this will be possible. The supervisor will work with you to ensure that the combination of your course load, the requirements of the position, and the requested activities or outside work will not impair your academic progress or ability to perform the RA position.

#### **How many RAs are there on a staff?**

Staffs are divided among the following areas: Midtown (Fairfield, Litchfield, and Newbury) and Westside (Centennial, Grasso, and Pinney). Some areas are larger than others, resulting in a range from five to ten Resident Assistants on each staff.

#### **If I get placed in Grasso or Pinney Halls, am I able to pick my roommates?**

Yes, you have the ability to choose who you can live with if they are eligible to live in the area you are assigned to.