Learning Assistant

Application Materials

2014 – 2015

The Advising and Learning Assistance Center
Academy Hall 4226 - 276-6269

The Office of Residence Life
Commons West - 276-6284
LEARNING ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION

Nature of the Position

The Learning Assistant (LA) is a Rensselaer junior, senior, or co-terminal undergraduate who is responsible for assisting first-year students in becoming active, independent and successful learners. LAs are assigned to a specific residence hall where they reside and assume responsibility for interacting frequently with the residents of that hall while providing academically-related programs, information and assistance. The LA provides a direct academic support service and acts as a liaison between Advising and Learning Assistance Center and their undergraduates. However the Learning Assistant is not a personal tutor for their Hall. The LA is directly responsible to the Advising and Learning Assistance Center and Residence Life.

Qualifications

The LA applicant must:

- Be a second semester sophomore OR a full-time upperclassman with at least one full academic year remaining who is in good academic standing with an overall GPA of at least 3.0.
- Be in good standing with regard to student conduct.
- Be prepared to live in a first-year residence hall.
- Be prepared to serve two consecutive semesters. (Fall and Spring Terms)
- Have knowledge of freshman level courses.
- Possess effective interpersonal skills.

Administrative/Professional/Training

The LA must:

1. Participate in pre-fall semester training and orientation, which includes the two weeks prior to the beginning of the Fall Semester, and two day re-orientation prior to the beginning of the Spring Semester.
2. Participate fully in all in-service training.
3. Participate in all weekly staff meetings with Advising and Learning Assistance Center Staff and all weekly meetings of the Residence Life Building Staff.

Evaluations

The LA must:

1. Participate fully in evaluations of the Learning Assistant Program and Residence Life Program.
2. Participate in and provide input to the selection of LA staff for the following academic year.
Student Services/Training

The LA must:

1. **Maintain residence** in the room assigned from the first day of the semester to the last day of finals.
2. Be proactive in getting to know all of your residents and helping them adjust to RPI.
3. Be sensitive to the needs and issues of students with disabilities.
4. Respect and maintain confidentiality of students and staff.
5. Make a special effort to be visible and available to the residents of your building through the use of rounds and other proactive means.
6. Be available to assist students in the hall on an individual or small group basis, primarily during weekly office hours (2 hours/week) and rounds (2 hours/week) or other mutually agreed upon times.
7. Plan and facilitate workshops in areas trained during the pre-semester training period (minimum of five in the fall and three in the spring). This involves:
   * Scheduling and publicizing workshops to hall residents
   * Presenting sessions alone or in cooperation with another LA/RA
   * Distributing, collecting, and turning in to the Advising and Learning Assistance Center Documentation of student evaluations of sessions held.
8. Publicize the free tutoring program and the Supplemental Instruction program to the First Year students, as well as notable dates including the drop deadline and the pass/no credit deadline.
9. Serve as a referral network between your students and other services available on campus.
10. As need demands, be a resource to the academic community at RPI by expressing student concerns. This includes updating RA/RD staff as to student concerns at weekly staff meetings and following up on Early Warning System (EWS). Provide feedback to the Advising and Learning Assistance Center as to concerns of students with programs at RPI so that the overall student experience can be improved.
11. Meet with residents with EWS warnings within one week, and offer suggestions for academic improvement, referring them to campus resources as necessary.
12. Hold weekly meetings with residents on academic probation in the Spring Semester.
13. Assist the Residence Life Staff in the enforcement of Institute policies in your residence hall, when appropriate.
14. Be proactive in helping to improve the LA program.
15. Complete other duties as assigned by professional staff.

Learning Skills Counseling, Communication, and Referrals

The LA must:

1. Be visible, available, and accessible to the residents of your hall. Promote awareness among residents of the LA role.
2. Assist students in identifying their academic needs using methods learned in LA training.
3. Aid students in developing an increased sense of responsibility for their academic success.
4. Know the resources on campus and, when necessary or appropriate, make referrals.
5. Serve as a positive role model to all students in their academic and social development.
LEARNING ASSISTANT APPLICATION 2014-2015

Name ________________________________________ Date ____________________________
RPI Address ___________________________________ RIN _____________________________
____________________________________________ RPI Phone # ______________________
Home Address _________________________________ Home Phone # ____________________
_____________________________________________ Email ____________________________

Major _______________________________ Last semester GPA ________ Overall GPA ________
Class Year __________ Credit hours expected Fall 2014 Term ____________________________

What time commitments will you have next year? (Include athletics, clubs, employment, etc.)*
_______________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

Previous peer-helping-peer experience*: ____________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

Please be sure to attach the following documents:
1) Resume of your other work experience
2) Two letters of recommendation (details on recommendation page)
3) Essay (see below)
4) Creative Piece (see below)

List other activities/organizations/volunteer positions in which you have been involved and in what
capacity (positions held). *This may be included in your resume.
_______________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

ESSAY: Please type an essay (one to two pages) that includes the following ideas:
1. What would you, as an LA, expect from the position? The students? Yourself?
2. What about you and your background make you feel that you would be a good LA (habits, experiences, attitudes, skills, etc.)?
3. Describe your strengths and how they will help you in meeting and getting to know your 150 residents, as well as dealing with the academic needs of your residents.
4. Other areas that you wish to add that will let us know more about you and your ability to fulfill the duties of being an LA.

Creative Piece: Please make a flyer to advertise for a workshop you may be holding. This would be very similar to an advertisement you may have seen your LA post within your building and should fit on regular 8½ x 11 sized paper. Your workshop topic can be any of the following: Time Management, Study Skills, Test Taking, or Finals Preparation.
LA APPLICATION PROCEDURES 2014-2015

Step 1: Find out more about being an LA by contacting one of the following LA’s or attending one of the informal information tables that will be held on campus:

Contact Info for LAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LA</th>
<th>Hall</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Cross</td>
<td>Bray 215</td>
<td><a href="mailto:crossl@rpi.edu">crossl@rpi.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coordinator)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Nebiolo</td>
<td>Caldwell 3006</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nebioe@rpi.edu">nebioe@rpi.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Coordinator)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Mathew</td>
<td>White IV 3001</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mathea5@rpi.edu">mathea5@rpi.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin George</td>
<td>Barton 2122</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Springli</td>
<td>Barton 3308</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esther Maeng</td>
<td>BarH D305</td>
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<td>Kyle Kondrat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Fortune</td>
<td>Cary 215</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fortun3@rpi.edu">fortun3@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Becca Wozniak</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:woznin@rpi.edu">woznin@rpi.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chen Shen</td>
<td>Crockett 215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Blevins</td>
<td>Hall 215</td>
<td><a href="mailto:blevih@rpi.edu">blevih@rpi.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 2: Complete the application form in this packet. If you have any questions, contact the Advising and Learning Assistance Center or one of the Learning Assistants above.

Step 3: Have two of the following write a recommendation for you. They should use the Recommendation Form in this packet for reference:

A Learning Assistant, Resident Assistant or Resident Director,
A Professor or advisor at Rensselaer or someone you have worked for during an internship, summer job, or work study.

Step 4: Return completed application to:

The Advising and Learning Assistant Center – Academy Hall 4226
by Monday, February 3, 2014 at 4:30pm

Step 5: Attend the LA Group Interview
LEARNING ASSISTANT RECOMMENDATION

Applicant’s Name __________________________________         Date _______________
Reference’s Name ____________________________________________________________

To the Applicant:
As part of the application process for the Learning Assistant position, 2 recommendations are required. This recommendation must be from one of the following sources:

1) A Learning Assistant, Resident Assistant or Resident Director
2) A Professor at Rensselaer
3) A staff person at Rensselaer who knows you well (i.e.: work-study supervisor, lab supervisor, advisor)
4) Someone you have worked for recently (i.e.: summer job, internship)

This source should know you well enough to write you a recommendation, and should know your qualifications and skills (he/she should probably be given a copy of your resume). This form is meant to help your reference in writing a recommendation for this position. Please give him/her this form and explain why you want to become a Learning Assistant.

To the Reference:
Please write an appropriate letter of recommendation based on your knowledge of the applicant. Below are some suggested topics to be covered in this letter, however feel free to add any other information that you feel is important to know about the applicant.

Position Overview:
The Learning Assistant (LA) is a paraprofessional joint member of both the Office of Residence Life and the Advising and Learning Assistance Center. The LA is responsible for assisting first-year students in becoming active, independent, and successful learners. LA’s are assigned to a specific residence hall where they reside and assume responsibility for interacting frequently with the residents of that hall and providing academic-related programs, information, and assistance. The LA provides a direct academic support service and acts as a liaison between the Advising and Learning Assistance Center and their undergraduates. However the Learning Assistant is not a personal tutor for their hall. The LA will be responsible for holding workshop presentations in front of groups of residents and may be responsible for anywhere between 80 and 200 freshmen, depending on placement. The LA is also responsible to the Office of Residence Life and must assist the Residence Life Staff in the enforcement of institute policies in the residence hall.
Items to Cover in the Recommendation:

1) How well and in what context do you know the applicant?

(Items 2-6) Please evaluate the applicant in the following areas by citing specific examples of the traits or behaviors you have observed while keeping in mind the position overview above. Please be aware that any issues or concerns you present may be addressed in an interview:

2) **Communication Skills:** Suggested areas to explore: Ability to express oneself, assertiveness, listening skills, and group skills.

3) **Leadership Qualities:** Suggested areas to explore: Organization, ability to motivate, innovativeness, honest judgment, related experiences with groups and presentations.

4) **Self-Awareness:** Suggested areas to explore: Personal goals, sense of values, awareness of strengths and weaknesses.

5) **Job Awareness:** Suggested areas to explore: Understanding of residence life, understanding of position, understanding of staff relationships, and awareness of student concerns.

6) **Inter-Personal Skills / Relationships with Others:** Suggested areas to explore: Responsibility, honesty, flexibility, tolerance for diversity, sensitivity to others.

7) Based on what you have written, evaluate the applicant for this position as either:
   - Exceptional
   - Very good
   - Good
   - Some reservations
   - Do not hire

Please sign and date the letter of recommendation and submit (hand in or mail) with this form to:

Jennifer Reittinger, Learning Skills Specialist  
Advising and Learning Assistance Center  
Academy Hall Suite 4226  
110 8th Street  
Troy, NY 12180

**Recommendation Deadline: Monday, February 3, 2014 at 4:30PM**

Address any questions to Jennifer Reittinger  
Phone: 276-6269  
e-mail: doughj4@rpi.edu
Learning Assistant Social (Required) – Group Interview

This is a chance for you to interact with the current Learning Assistants in a “social” setting. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and get honest answers from the current staff. Snacks will be available while we play some games and just get to know one another outside of an “interview” setting. This is a chance to let your personality shine 😊 and have some fun at the same time! You’ll have a chance to get your questions answered, too.

Date: TBA
Place: TBA