Wellness Assistant

The Wellness Assistant (WA) works in a highly-utilized area of the quad – the Wellness/Fitness Center. This facility is provided so that students can relieve stress and work on personal fitness goals without the need to travel far. Part of providing inviting, intellectual, and inclusive residences involves efforts to develop students holistically; Wellness Assistants are key peer educators not only in the proper use of the center, but are also hubs of information for resources for nutrition, health, and fitness concerns.

Wellness Assistants are required to work approximately 15 hours/week. This includes weekday, weeknight, and weekend duty shifts. Division of hours is at the discretion of the Quad Information Center supervisor (typically a Graduate Assistant) with the consent of the Quad Coordinator.

Wellness Center Management

The primary role of the WA is to manage the Wellness Center and any associated spaces, systems, and processes. The following list of responsibilities encompasses the general tasks associated with WC management, but it is in no way exhaustive; additional or variant responsibilities will depend on the needs of the quad.

Wellness Assistants are required to:

• Have a general knowledge of on- and off-campus resources to which to refer students for the variety of concerns that may arise (academic, mental and physical health, wellness and nutrition, etc.).
• Have specific knowledge on the proper use of gym equipment; possess the ability to answer basic questions in regard to student wellness and refer to experts (nutritionists, counselors, etc.) for further advice.
• Manage the logs and processes of the Wellness Center. This includes check-in/out, machine repair logs, communication logs, etc.
• Maintain the orderliness of the Wellness Center and all associated spaces (storage rooms, programming space, etc.).
• Respect students’ privacy when addressing concerns while also following all prescribed reporting obligations as outlined in the staff manual and by supervisors. This includes information protected by FERPA and other applicable laws and regulations.
• Maintain a high level of customer service while addressing student needs:
  o Communicates in a respectful, helpful, and friendly tone; displays an inviting attitude.
  o Calms angry and irate individuals; does not add to volatile situations through language, tone, demeanor, or actions.
  o Exercises appropriate follow-through and communicates same to affected parties.
• Work independently or as a member of the WC Team (other WAs, professional staff members) as appropriate in an efficient and productive manner.
• Maintain and consistently update attractive and informative bulletin boards in the Wellness Center or other designated areas (Flag Hall, lobbies, etc.):
  o Regularly remove outdated materials from bulletin boards.
  o Replace damaged bulletin board decorations and contents within a reasonable timeframe designated by professional staff.
Programming

Wellness Assistants can affect the wellbeing and healthy habits of residents through programming. WA educational programming will be aligned with one or more of the department’s learning outcomes (typically “...overcome challenges” or “...contribute to a sustainable environment”).

Wellness Assistants are required to:

- Complete the programming requirement for Wellness Assistants as described in the staff manual and by supervisors.
- Adequately advertise for programming (whether it is one’s own program or in support of another program) through postings, electronic media, or other appropriate means.
- Utilize resources (funds, gift cards, equipment, etc.) in a responsible manner and in accordance with departmental policy.
- Complete all associated paperwork (proposals, evaluations, invoices/receipts, etc.) correctly and by the prescribed deadlines set by supervisor(s).
- Actively support quad, departmental, or University programming through advertising, attendance, and by motivating resident students to be involved.

Role Model

As a member of the Residential Life staff, Wellness Assistants are exceedingly visible members of the campus community especially given their positions in the highly trafficked Wellness Center. “Life in a fishbowl,” as it is called, requires WAs to be constantly aware of their actions as their behavior reflects upon their department and University.

Wellness Assistants are required to:

- Abide by the policies and stipulations outlined in Community Rights and Responsibilities; the Residence License; the staff manual; this document; and all local, state, and federal laws.
- Convey a positive attitude toward the Wellness Assistant position and its duties and responsibilities as well as toward the Department of Residential Life and the University at Albany.
- Show respect for persons of all backgrounds, races, sexual orientations, religions, abilities, genders, etc. The WA will abide by all sexual harassment and non-discrimination policies in his/her relationships with fellow staff members and students.
- Utilize electronic media (e.g. personal websites, online social networking, photographs, video and audio recordings, email, instant messenger, and phone/voicemail) in ways that are consistent with the expectations of the WA position and, in general, the department.

Diversity

The Department of Residential Life is committed to providing environments free from harassment, discrimination, and intolerance in order to fulfill the University’s mission of a diverse campus. Wellness Assistants serve as key educators for the value of diversity in the residence halls, for it is from a broad range of perspectives that knowledge is expanded and deepened.

Wellness Assistants are required to:

- Treat all students equally without regard for sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious background, physical ability, veteran status, or any other characteristic as outlined in appropriate non-discrimination policies.
- Report hate or bias-related behaviors, statements, or incidents using protocol established in staff training, departmental policy, and by supervisors. This includes but is not limited to verbal or written statements, derogatory jokes, and graffiti. When reporting, WAs should remain at the scene of the incident (so long as it is safe to do so) until duty staff or other appropriate personnel arrive to manage the incident.
**Incident Reporting**

Sometimes, situations occur in the Wellness Center that requires a WA to transmit through official channels the nature and circumstances of the incident. Typically, these are accidents involving the use of the machines and equipment of the Wellness Center. However, as an agent of the University and Department of Residential Life, the WA is required to report to appropriate personnel potential violations of University policy or any local, state, and federal laws.

**Wellness Assistants are required to:**

- Respond to emergency situations in accordance with departmental protocol and instructions of professional staff or first-responders. These situations include, but are not limited to, power outages, floods, weather emergencies, verbal or physical altercations, sexual assault, medical emergencies, mental health crises, suicide, robbery, fire alarms, and building/quad evacuation.
- Report violations of University policy in accordance with departmental protocol and instructions of professional staff. These situations include, but are not limited to, underage consumption or possession of alcohol; illegal drug possession or use; and quiet/courtesy hours violations. When reporting, WAs should remain at the scene of the incident (so long as it is safe to do so) until duty staff or other appropriate personnel arrive to manage the incident.
- Correctly and completely fill out the Incident Report Form (IRF) and/or Accident Report Form (ARF) immediately following an incident and then submit it for review by the Quad Coordinator in the manner dictated by quad staff policy and/or departmental protocol.

**Openings & Closings**

In order to execute the efficient, safe, and proper opening or closing of the residence halls, WAs are required to perform certain duties and functions that provide for the maximum possible security of the residence halls and during certain breaks, of the belongings of residents.

**Wellness Assistants are required to:**

- Report for work prior to residence hall opening and remain at work after residence hall closings for a period described by supervisors. Reporting dates and work assignments are at the discretion of the Department of Residential Life professional staff members.
- Execute all check-in and check-out procedures as described in the student staff manual, training, and by supervisors.
- Prepare the Wellness Center and Quad for opening and closing through check-in/out materials preparation, posting of signage, development of efficient processes, and other assignments as described by professional staff.
ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The WA position is expected to be the next priority to academics and family obligations. WAs are expected to plan for at-home family events, tests, papers, and other commitments so that they do not unduly interfere with the requirements of their position. The following policies and expectations are in place to ensure the efficient and uninterrupted management of the residence halls; a high baseline performance of all staff; and, most importantly, that the staff can maintain a healthy balance of academic and nonacademic commitments.

Grades and Academic Commitments

- Wellness Assistants must maintain at least a 2.5 cumulative grade point average in order to be hired for and maintain their positions.
- If a WA’s cumulative grade point average falls between 2.25 and 2.5 while in the position, the WA will be placed on probation for a maximum of one academic semester provided it is mathematically possible to raise the cumulative GPA to 2.5 within that amount of time. Otherwise, the WA will be deemed ineligible for reappointment/continued appointment.
- If a WA’s cumulative grade point average falls below a 2.25, the WA’s continued appointment will be at the discretion of the Quad Coordinator of the WA’s assigned quad and will only be maintained if it is mathematically possible to raise the GPA back to 2.5 within one academic semester while not unduly compromising the WA’s well-being or job performance. Otherwise, the WA will be deemed ineligible for reappointment/continued appointment.
- If a WA’s semester grade point average falls below a 2.5 for two consecutive semesters even if the cumulative GPA stays at or above 2.5, the WA may be placed on probation or deemed ineligible for reappointment/continued appointment at the discretion of the direct supervisor and Quad Coordinator.
- Co-curricular commitments (student organization membership/executive board member, research assistantship, student teaching, teaching assistantship, athletics, etc.) should be discussed with the Quad Coordinator and supervisor. The nature of the Wellness Assistant position is flexible enough to accommodate many activities, but these commitments must be carefully balanced with the demands of the WA job in order to avoid negative impact on the WA’s performance.

Outside Commitments

- Notification of employment beyond the WA position must be transmitted to both the supervisor and Quad Coordinator prior to beginning said employment (if outside employment is held at the time of WA appointment, said employment should be disclosed at that time). Commitments related to outside employment are not approved reasons to miss Residential Life obligations (meetings, programs, trainings, etc.); missing Residential Life obligations or duty shifts in favor of other employment can be used as justification for termination from Residential Life position.

Hall Assignment

- Residential Life reserves the right to change staff room assignments at any time, especially if it is in the best interest of the WA and/or the residents.
- Transferring to another hall mid-year or between years is not permitted except at the discretion of the appropriate Quad Coordinator(s).

Staff Meetings/Training:

- Attendance and participation at All-Staff meetings is required. All-Staff meetings usually occur monthly.
- Attendance at regularly scheduled staff and one-on-one meetings is required; these usually occur weekly.
- Attendance and participation at all sessions during the Fall and Spring Training is required. WAs will not be excused from training except for UAlbany-specific academic requirements.
- Training of some WAs in specific areas of expertise may be requested. Self-selected workshops may also be required.
Alcohol

- WAs must exercise good judgment when making decisions regarding alcohol use.
- WAs under the age of 21 may not consume or possess alcohol or alcohol paraphernalia (empty containers, funnels, etc.).
- Of-age WAs are prohibited from drinking with or providing alcohol to underage students.
- Of-age WAs should refrain from drinking to excess, storing alcohol in common areas or places reasonably accessible to underage students, and from possessing more than the amount allowed in the Bulk Containers policy as outlined in Community Rights and Responsibilities and the Residence License.
- No staff member may be in the presence of the illegal use of alcohol except in response to a violation of alcohol policy or applicable law.
- WAs may not use alcohol prior to or while on duty.

Drugs

- WAs are prohibited from using and distributing any illegal drug.
- WAs are prohibited from abusing and distributing any prescription medications; WAs are prohibited from abusing over-the-counter medications and may only distribute same at the direction of the department (ex. Flu “Kits”, etc.).
- WAs may not be in the presence of a violation of applicable drug policies or laws except in response to that violation.

Electronic Media and Websites

- WAs may not post items of an offensive or sexual nature.
- Depictions of or comments alluding to policy violations are prohibited.

Key Control

- WAs must gain permission of a member of the professional staff (usually the Director-on-Duty) in order to obtain and use the master key ring or “recess” keys.
- WAs are expected to use master keys/recess keys only in administrative procedures (opening/closing, maintenance procedure) or when necessary in emergency situations.
- WAs are prohibited from using master keys for inappropriate access to student rooms, restricted administrative offices, or mechanical areas including the maintenance tunnels. RAs are expected to follow key control procedures as specified and report any losses.
- WAs are subject to disciplinary action if master keys/recess keys under their supervision are lost or misused. This includes probation, termination of employment, and/or reparations.
- Administrative keys issued to WAs (Wellness Center Key, Penthouse area key, etc.) are to be used for work-related purposes only. Misusing keys to gain unauthorized access to spaces or granting access of non-staff members (or unauthorized staff members) to restricted spaces as defined by professional staff are prohibited. WAs are subject to disciplinary action if administrative keys are lost or misused.
Performance Appraisal

- WA’s performance will be based on fulfillment of duties as well as the terms and conditions that are included in this document.
- WA judged to be performing below-average; or who fail to fully meet the requirements of the position as outlined in this document or as described in training or by supervisors; or who violate the policies and expectations described in this document, the Residence License, or Community Rights & Responsibilities are subject to disciplinary action. This includes:
  - Verbal Warning – given by direct supervisor
  - Written Warning – given by direct supervisor
  - Probation – given by Quad Coordinator
  - Termination – at the discretion of Quad Coordinator
  - Any of the above may include certain conditions such as extra training, additional work assignments, or other reasonable condition as determined by supervisor or quad coordinator.
  - The above constitutes a hierarchy of disciplinary statuses; however, assignment of status is at the discretion of professional staff as well as the nature of the condition that leads to disciplinary action.
- WAs will participate in an evaluation process, which may include input from residents and co-workers, each semester. Solicitation of and appropriate use of input is at the discretion of professional staff members.
- Decisions regarding renewal for an additional academic year will be based on performance evaluations and the WA’s reapplication; renewal for the following academic year is at the discretion of the Quad Coordinator in consultation with the WA’s current supervisor.
- Renewal in the position may be contingent upon certain conditions, such as probation, extra training, additional work assignments, or other reasonable conditions as described by the Quad Coordinator.
- WA judged to be at a below-average rating in evaluations; or who commit actions unbecoming the WA position; or whose reapplication is determined to be insufficient for reappointment (as judged by the Quad Coordinator) may not be renewed for the following academic year. This rule applies to all staff members regardless of disciplinary status (warnings, probation).
- Termination by Employer
  - Improper performance or non-performance of the duties and responsibilities described in this document, in training, and by professional staff, or any other behavior which in the judgment of professional staff may significantly affect the ability of the WA to discharge the duties of the position may result in termination of employment. Decisions regarding termination will be made by the Quad Coordinator who supervises the area where the WA is employed. The Wellness Assistant will have the right to a review of the reasons for such termination.

I have read the description of the duties, responsibilities, policies, and expectations related to the Wellness Assistant position and agree to abide by the stipulations of this document, the terms and conditions of the Residence License, and the code of conduct as outlined in Community Rights and Responsibilities.

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: _____________

Print Name: ___________________________________________