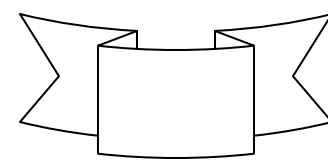




beyond expectations

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RESIDENCE LIFE PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFF JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY

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The purpose of this study was to determine the satisfaction level of the Community Assistants (CAs) and Peers Assisting Community Education in Residence (PACERs) in their roles and to inform the professional staff in the Office of Housing and Residence Life (OHRL) on areas of dissatisfaction and areas for improvement. In order for OHRL to live up to its mission and vision, it is imperative that they have well-trained and satisfied student leaders to carry out the mission and vision on the front lines. This study attempted to find the areas where the department could grow in this.

Outcomes:

- To improve the quality of training and supervision received by paraprofessional staff within OHRL—Our paraprofessional staff serve as a front-line to our residents. If we can improve the quality of student staff, we can greatly improve the student experience at IUP.
- To improve the morale and satisfaction of the paraprofessional staff within OHRL—Again, being at the front-line, the stronger the morale within the paraprofessional staff, the greater able they will be to serve the residents and improve their IUP experience.

Activity: Specifically, the areas that were studied are the following:

- CA/PACER selection and seminar (the process by which paraprofessional staff receive initial training and become selected to serve as CA's and PACER's).
- CA/PACER training (specifically the large two-week long summer training and any in-house training received from their direct supervisor).
- CA/PACER roles and responsibilities (the understanding that paraprofessional staff have of their roles within the communities they serve).
- Administrative support of CA's and PACER's (how paraprofessionals feel about the support they receive from above their supervisors).
- Compensations (how CA's and PACER's feel about the compensation packages they receive).

Methodology: The instrument used in this study was an electronic survey through Qualtrics. The survey was set up and distributed in early December 2010 and student staff had two weeks to respond to the survey. The survey specifically targeted the following areas: CA/PACER selection and seminar, CA/PACER training, roles and responsibilities of the CA/PACER, relationships and programming, administrative support, and compensation. Of the solicited individuals, 67.3% responded to the survey.

Key Findings: Student staff were generally satisfied with the recruitment and seminar offered. Students were more satisfied overall with the building director training vs. the centralized training. More in-depth training for PACERS is needed to meet their needs. Training the staff on how to program should be revisited. Relationships with residents and programs were viewed as most important by CA's and PACER's., with crisis management and living-learning initiatives viewed as least important. It is clear that staff need to do a better job of informing students of the importance of the living-learning aspects of their role. The most important tool was communication, with staff meetings, e-mail and one-on-ones being the top three methods of communication. Compensation responses imply the need to do a better job of educating our CA's and PACER's on the extremely great quality of their compensation package.

Results: Due to a high response rate, it was possible to collect solid data and key findings from the surveys. Several comments were shared by the surveyed individuals amongst the regular survey questions. This also allowed for the surveyor to glean a lot of helpful information to be used by different professionals within the department. Key finds from the survey were shared with the Training committee and other departmental committees to aid in the direction of those committees in improving the training, supervision, and general direction the CA and PACER programs.

Plan for the Future: This study is one that should be done on an annual basis in order to keep up with the changing needs of both the paraprofessional staff and the residents we serve.



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