The Importance of a Diversity Advisor in Residence Life

In order to continuously create and foster an inclusive environment in the Aquinas College community, it is important to respond to the needs of the student population. The Diversity Advisor therefore, would act as a source of support and information for all students, especially students of color and students of underrepresented populations. In this respect, issues of inclusion and equity can be discussed together with the planning of multiculturalism and comfort on campus. We understand that students at our institution come from all walks of life, and have different experiences. In order to promote and facilitate discussion about these different backgrounds, it is important to identify peers who are sensitive to issues of diversity and are willing to further the growth of multiculturalism on campus.

Job Description

General Statement of Duties:

The Aquinas College Diversity Advisor is a student who is currently employed by the Residence Life Office. The Diversity Advisor (DA) serves as a primary resource for information and assistance on a hall-wide basis. The Diversity Advisor position was developed foremost to be a source of support and information for all students and especially for students of color and other underrepresented populations. The DA also serves as a catalyst for building a positive community and global awareness in the residence hall.

As residents begin their AQ experience, the Diversity Advisor can assist all students with their transition to College life as well as to help enrich their cultural development. The Diversity Advisors and Resident Assistants work together to best meet the needs of the students in their building.

The Diversity Advisor is directly accountable to their Residence Hall Area Coordinator and indirectly to the Director of Diversity Initiatives and Senior RA staff.

Minimum Qualifications and Additional Requirements:

1. You must be at least sophomore status at the conclusion of the semester in which you are applying (i.e. May for a fall position).
2. You must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.7 or higher at the time of application and at the conclusion of the semester in which you are applying. A cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or higher must be maintained during the period of employment.
3. You must be available for employment for two semesters upon initial hire.
4. You must not be on any College probation (academic or social). During the period of employment, DAs must not be in violation of any College policies or procedures.
5. You must have an interest in continuing your education on diversity issues and implementing your knowledge within your hall and campus.
6. All positions within the department of Residence Life are interrelated. Consequently, disciplinary action you receive while employed in one Residence Life position may impact your employment status in another Residence Life position, up to and including discharge.

Responsibilities:

1. **Community Building and Peer Relationships:**
   1. Become personally acquainted with residents of color and build a rapport with all residents that will foster open communication.
   2. Work closely with the Area Coordinator, Senior Resident Assistant and/or other Resident Assistants regarding concerns in/on the respective hall/floor.
   3. Meet monthly with the Director of Diversity Initiatives for training and program planning.
   4. Conduct monthly educational/social programs in residence hall.
   5. Collaborate with building RAs to facilitate diversity programming.
   6. Implement and support the use of community standards on your floor and in the hall.

2. **Peer Assistance:**
   1. Develop the capacity to listen, understand, be flexible and open-minded in responding to student needs and concerns.
   2. Encourage and assist individuals in finding their own solutions.
   3. Remember your limits and your scope of responsibility – make referrals as necessary and keep Area Coordinator informed of any concerns.
   4. Maintain appropriate confidentiality between you and your residents; inform your Area Coordinator of any concerns.
   5. You are expected to address the hall population with issues of diversity and multiculturalism.

3. **Programming:**
   1. Develop monthly diversity related programs separately and in conjunction with other DAs.
   2. Utilize events and activities that already exist on campus and in the Grand Rapids community that meet the needs and interests of students with an extra emphasis on diversity.
   3. To increase DA staff effectiveness, visibility and communication throughout campus, DA’s are **expected to utilize on-campus offices and resources**. DA’s will serve as liaisons to AQ departments or organization such as: Career and Counseling, Disability Services, Diversity Initiatives, Campus Life, etc.
4. **Administrative Duties:**
   1. Assume duty responsibility according to the formal and/or informal hall schedule for RAs and remain on call as required.
   2. Attend and support all campus Diversity Initiatives events.
   3. Attend monthly group training/consultation with Director of Diversity Initiatives.
   4. Attend and actively participate in regularly scheduled DA staff meetings, hall staff meetings, and training.
   5. Develop and promote a positive working relationship with all residence hall staff, including Resident Assistants, other Diversity Advisors, receptionists, custodial and Dining Service employees.
   6. Other duties as assigned.

**OTHER:**

1. Employment is for the academic year; however, continued employment is subject to satisfactory performance. Individual evaluations of the DA will be made during each semester by the AC and/or Director of Diversity Initiatives – these evaluations will be shared with the DA.
2. DAs receive remuneration for their DA position in the form of room and board in campus housing.
3. DAs are recognized by the College as strong role models for all Residence Hall students. It is expected that DAs present a positive attitude and example with regard to responsible behavior and responsible alcohol use.
4. Each AC/Sr. RA and staff may discover particular needs within their hall, which are not addressed in this Job Description. The Office of Residence Life encourages this individuality and creativity in job performance.
5. Other related duties as assigned.