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2019 Winner: Katherine (Katie) MacGregor

New Professional Award

To whom it may concern:

It is my pleasure to nominate this candidate. Although your nomination guidelines refer to minimally covering two of six questions, I have covered them all simply because that's easy to do with this candidate.

There are many ways in which she has gone above the expectations for her position. Some of the most notable include several key residence life projects. It should be noted that interest among the Residence Life Managers is a key factor in how these are assigned. As such certain RLMs have more projects than others. This candidate has stepped up to take on multiple projects. For example, she is leading ongoing professional development opportunities for Senior RAs. Although it is still a work in progress, she has also been developing a comprehensive activity map of intentional activities for the academic year. This will be used by all RLMs for their teams.

As a supervisor, this candidate has this dealt with multiple supervision issues that would be challenging for anybody, even a much more experienced professional. She has done so with outstanding fortitude and integrity, and she has not hesitated to take the right course of action, even when that has been quite difficult. Furthermore, through these issues, her RAs have consistently expressed feeling supported by this candidate.

As a new initiative, the Associate Directors decided to divide the RLMs into one strategic team overseeing RA hiring and another overseeing RA training. Each team is responsible for leading strategic planning, implementation, assessment and more for their assigned project. There was also the opportunity for one or two RLMs on each team to step up and take on a leadership role within their committee. This candidate (along with one of her colleagues) did so for the training team. They have done a tremendous job running with and shaping that role so far. As usual, her colleagues have expressed appreciation for her willingness to step up like this.

Our RLMs are responsible for developing and implementing a plan to manage all logistics associated with move in day(s) in their respective areas. This candidate has a particularly challenging area for this, with a complex of several distinct buildings all moving in using an area with traffic complications and a major construction site immediately next door. For 2018 move-in, an Associate Director planned to spend the day supporting this candidate in her area due to the potential for challenges and problems, but the AD soon realized that she had everything flowing so smoothly that no extra support was needed.

She also did a tremendous job organizing first community meetings for her area, which is another significant logistical challenge. She partnered with her area's Residence Association to engage them with students from the start, and she supported student leaders from the campus sustainability office to successfully implement a labor-intensive, but highly successful used item collection, storage and re-sale program.

As an example of this candidate's commitment to do whatever needs to be done, she took on responsibility in the summer for placing catering orders for several BBQ events that would include approximately 2500 students. When she checked the status of the order a few days before the events, she discovered that the vendor had misplaced the orders (despite having email confirmations). We suddenly had no food plan. Although the next day was move-in day, this candidate joined one other person to take a van to a crowded Costco and jam pack the entire vehicle with food, all of which had to be taken to multiple locations back on campus for refrigerated storage. She worked at all of this until it was done late in the evening. Then she got up and coordinated the move-in day described above.

Among other serious on call issues, this candidate has had to respond to a severe student wellness situation wherein emergency responders had to break the door down to access a person in distress. She undertook and successfully managed all of the following steps:

- Promptly meeting with, supporting the roommate and connecting them with other resources
- Sharing / gathering information from emergency responders
- Working with the Building Services Manager and her team to restore the door and work quickly on other facilities issues in the apartment
- Submitting an Early Alert so as to notify the campus Student Support Services team and otherwise appropriately documenting the situation and follow up
- Sharing updates as applicable with the RL senior leadership team
- Utilizing pre-existing rapport to support the student in distress when she returned to residence
- Continued to support the roommate soon after, including working with the housing assignments team on a priority transfer to a new community and working with that area's RLM to ensure seamless support for the student
- Continuing to support the student who was in distress

This candidate has certainly been engaged in the campus community outside the housing department. She is for example working towards a Graduate Certificate in Adult Learning and Education at UBC. As well, she became certified as a QPR trainer and has delivered several QPR training workshops on campus to contribute to a more suicide-alert campus community. She has also supported major campus events such as Imagine Day (orientation for first year students) when she helped with on-the-ground logistics at Thunderbird Stadium for the main event pep rally for several thousand incoming students.

This candidate has taken a number of steps to be engaged in the profession outside our institution. She is currently a mentee in the OACUHO Professional Mentorship program, and she has volunteered to be a mentor in the OACUHO Student Mentorship program. She participated in NWACUHO in 2018, and she will be participating in OACUHO in 2019, including submitting a program proposal. This candidate also took the initiative to complete a certificate in Volunteer Management Leadership from Humber College in the summer of 2018. Finally, she has expressed interest in any relevant community opportunities, for example gaining approval for funding to complete the Living Works Suicide-to-Hope workshop once it is offered again in the local area.

This candidate coordinates what we call our Commuter Student Hostel, a program that uses several rooms in her area for commuter students who may need a place to stay for a night, particularly during peak academic periods. The Commuter Student Hostel is also a resource for emergency housing for campus partners such as the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office.

There are also a number of key ways in which this candidate has demonstrated a strong capacity to manage transition:

- She has always taken the initiative to outline clear goals for herself.
- She built strong connections with other RLMs / colleagues for support in her first year, she continues to seek opportunities to learn from her colleagues's experience, and she has quickly become a trusted resource (now in her second year) for RLMs who just started this past summer.
- The above point is all the more impressive considering that while many residences are geographically spread out at UBC, her area is one of the farthest from the main residence core.

This letter has perhaps been long, but hopefully nonetheless succinct. This candidate has shown such tremendous commitment, capability and potential that there is simply too much to cover. I will leave you with one final note: she has had three different supervisors since she started and yet continued to be patient and supportive, despite what is obviously more change than would be ideal.

Sincerely
Sean Ryan
University of British Columbia