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NOMINATION FOR JESS RAYMOND FOR OUTSTANDING MID LEVEL PROFESSIONAL AWARD

It is with pleasure, confidence and enthusiasm that I nominate Jessica Raymond for the SEAHO Mid Level Professional Award. I had the pleasure of supervising Jess for the seven years she served as an Area Director here at William and Mary. Jess consistently performed her duties in an ethical and professional manner, always going above and beyond our expectations. As I have been known to say, Jess ranks in the top 1% of Area Directors I have supervised over my 29 year career. Respected and admired by her staff and colleagues, Jess provided leadership, support, vision, ideas, and a mature, innovative perspective to our staff. She seized opportunities for involvement and exposure to new projects and programs and was an active contributor to departmental and Division committees and task forces. No matter what the assignment, Jess combined her signature caring attitude toward students with solid administrative, supervisory, and communication skills. Through her years of service, she constantly displayed an unwavering dedication to students and from all reports she has continued this approach at the University of Central Florida.

Few professionals embody a love of work as Jess does; none are more creative. During our weekly staff meetings Jess amused us with stories of her exploits with her buildings and residents. We were grateful when Facilities Management improved the drainage in the window wells of Jess' buildings because every time we had heavy rains Jess ended up crawling into the window wells to pull leaves and debris from the drains. When there was a problem with the plumbing in the hall bathrooms Jess investigated by opening the door to the pipe chase and having an RA flush, causing water to spew all over Jess. Then there was the year she reluctantly ended up in the Emergency Room during opening after severely cutting her leg with a box cutter. Half conscious, she had to be convinced to go to the ER as she did not want to leave her staff. We laughed at her expense but ultimately every incident was because she was determined to manage her facilities and serve her residents well.

Jess never complains and is always on top of things. When there is a crisis of any kind Jess will be among the first on site and will quietly work behind the scenes using her calm professionalism and keen sense of observation to do just the right thing to help without being intrusive or overstepping her bounds. This is just one of her special gifts and one which I grew to appreciate more and more through hurricanes, fires, floods, ice storms, and tragic student suicides.

While Jess always cared for and tended to the apartment complex that was also part of her area, she had a true passion for the off-campus facility known as Dillard – for its beautiful stately buildings and verdant grounds, delighted or disappointed residents (depending on their perspective), dedicated student staff, hard working housekeepers, and the feisty indigenous wildlife. At one point we were certain she would chain herself to the majestic elm tree that was subsequently removed from the front of one of the buildings. Jess and her staff named the animals that shared the Dillard property and collectively worked to protect them. Because this facility was three miles from campus it remained an unpopular living option for many students but once there Jess made them feel they had a very special home.

In addition to all she did in her area Jess served as advisor to the William and Mary chapter of the

National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH); she renewed and enhanced the campus program designed to assist students who planned to move off campus; and she was a popular program presenter at various state, regional, and national conferences. These are small examples of the manner in which Jess works and the level of commitment she has to students, to her department and to the profession. She always goes above and beyond what is expected but will do everything she can to avoid the spotlight. In fact, receiving an award like this will make her uncomfortable as she never considers herself worthy. Yet, her contributions and successes cannot be ignored. I believe her accomplishments, experience, love of students, and dedication to the profession make her a strong and deserving nominee for the Mid Level Professional Award. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deb Boykin

Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs
and Director of Residence Life