



The University of Tennessee
Apartments Area Office
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January 11, 2010

SEAHO New Professional Award Selection Committee:

I am very pleased to write this letter of support for Ms. Anna Hobby, a nominee for the SEAHO New Professional Award. Anna has been a colleague of mine at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville since the fall of 2007. In the past two and a half years, I have watched Anna grow as a professional, transform a residence hall, inspire countless students, mentor student leaders, and transition seamlessly following a much deserved promotion. I have also learned a tremendous amount from Anna, and I for one am extremely happy that she found her way to UTK!

Anna was hired in 2007 as the Hall Director for Morrill Hall, a mainly freshman co-ed residence hall holding over 700 students and housing six different learning communities. A notoriously difficult building due to its wide variety of highly achieving students (and all the pressures that accompany that), Anna walked right in and made an immediate difference. In the two years she served as director of the Morrill community, new learning communities were implemented, continuing ones thrived, and some of the strongest resident assistants UT has seen in years emerged. Nicky Alana, a former RA in Morrill who is currently in medical school and an inductee in the RA Hall of Fame, says, "Anna was the best supervisor I have ever had. She knew how to motivate, encourage, support, and spur us all to do our best. She helped me to see what I could achieve."

Anna was named chair of the RA Recruitment and Selection Committee for the 2008-2009 academic year. She brought new ideas and transformed the way we market the position on our campus. Shockingly, she managed to save us money in a difficult budget year while simultaneously raising our application numbers by a considerable amount. Results like this are par for the course when Anna is the leader of your team. Her ability to think outside the box and implement new ideas inspires everyone she works with to bring their 'A' game each day. Anna currently advises our RA Training Committee and is overseeing the production of a new RA Class Manual that will bring a fresh and exciting updated way to introduce students to the RA job. Dan Stypa, the chairperson of the RA Training Committee and advisor for the United Residence Halls Council, says of his supervisor, "Anna is extremely organized and possesses a wealth of knowledge. She took a chance on me as a grad committee chair and has been extremely supportive of all the committee efforts. She never criticizes, but always offers advice and can steer you in the right direction. Anna is the type of professional I want to be, and she has been an invaluable resource as I search for my first professional position this spring."

In the summer of 2009, Anna was promoted to the Assistant Director position in charge of the East Area of campus. Rather than managing one building, she now supervises the Hall Directors in four residence halls, which has given her the opportunity to work with student athlete housing, a new learning community, and many non-traditional students. Anna jumped into her new role with gusto and has



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transformed the East Area. She has instilled a sense of “East Area Pride” and has created an elephant mascot that the RA staffs absolutely love. Always a great presence in front of student leaders, Anna now has the chance to work with 60 RAs in her area and motivate them to greater heights. With her professional staff members, Anna immediately earned their respect, rejuvenated the group, and is currently helping two of the four in intensive job searches of their own. Kristin Barnett, a first year Hall Director in the East Area, says, “I came into this job as the only new person in my area. It was kinda scary, but Anna was very supportive and helpful. She is the type of person who welcomes questions, and I never hesitate to call her, no matter how trivial my question may seem. She is a great boss!”

Anna and I currently work side by side in the East/Apartments Area Office. Since she has come onboard as an Assistant Director, I have had more opportunities to work with her than ever before. Anna is exceptionally motivated. She is involved in every aspect of college life here at UT. She has made positive connections with other departments on campus that have made a big impact on our programming opportunities within and outside of Student Affairs. Anna is also highly involved in the SEAHO region, and currently sits on the programming committee for the second year in a row. She attended RELI as a Hall Director and jumps at any and all opportunities to gain more professional experience and knowledge. I am delighted to have Anna as a close colleague for many reasons, not the least of which being that she motivates me to do a better job. With our offices so close, we have formed a healthy competition to see whose area can produce the most programs, have the most successful RAs, and claim the most popular mascot.

Anna Hobby is a model new professional. It is almost silly to use those words, as “new” seems wrong in many ways since she has managed to fit so many wonderful experiences into only 3 years. Her energy and enthusiasm for the job never cease to amaze and humble me. If you are looking for a new professional who has made the absolute most of her time, grown in her position, motivated student leaders, mentored both graduate student and professional staff, and has a bright residence life future ahead of her, Anna Hobby is your best choice – hands down. She has helped bring new initiatives and ideas to our department, cannot walk across campus without numerous students stopping to chat with her, and gives her all every single day. A mere letter of recommendation cannot begin to portray the way that Anna positively influences people and makes differences around her. It is my honest opinion that the SEAHO region and this prestigious award can only grow in strength with Anna as an active member and award recipient. Thank you for your time and please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

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