



Housing and Residence Life

December 28th, 2009

Dear SEAHO Award Selection Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this letter of support today for Carla McKnight, graduate assistant at the University of Central Florida. As Carla's direct supervisor for the past one and half years I feel well qualified to talk about Carla's many strengths and talents as a graduate assistant.

One of Carla's greatest assets is her willingness to take on new challenges. In fact, being a graduate assistant in housing was a new challenge for Carla, as she had never previously worked for a housing department in any capacity. In taking on new challenges Carla has opened herself up for professional growth and development as well as learned how to be a mentor to her staff and her peers. One of the ways Carla has grown is her ability to maintain personal relationships, yet hold her staff accountable at the same time. Carla understands the value of having a critical conversation, but knows that having a professional and personal relationship with a staff member allows her words and actions to have a greater impact.

Another way that Carla has grown as a graduate assistant is that not afraid to step out of her comfort zone. Carla has done that this year by taking on the advising on our area council. While Carla has never advised before, she has put much of her energy into making this group successful. She had done this by holding the executive board accountable, planned retreats that while they built a strong team also challenge her students to grow, and by constantly being a positive source of encouragement. She also has utilized the resources from last year's area council advisor and the experience of her resident assistant co advisor. In doing so, Carla has demonstrated her ability to know her limitations and rely on peers and student staff members that can assist her, which can be a challenge for any professional and any level.

Also Carla is also a graduate assistant who has been able to use technology and creativity to better assist our students and promote events of the department. One of the ways Carla has been able to do this is to use Facebook to get out information about how to keep safe on campus. Carla is dedicated to helping her staff come up with new programming ideas that will get students who live in our apartment communities more involved within the residential community. Carla has also focused on research and scholarship. She has presented at a few conferences and was the only master's level student to be asked to come into the doctor student class of the UCF higher education program to present her research about military colleges.



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In conclusion, I strongly urge you to consider Carla for this award given her growth, development and what she has contributed to our field. Should you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance please feel free to contact me via phone at (407) 882-7001 or e-mail at ctickner@mail.ucf.edu. Thank you in advance for considering Carla for this award.

Respectfully,

Corey Tickner

Corey Tickner
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