



**Department of Housing
and Residence Life**

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with the utmost pleasure that I write this recommendation for the SEAHO Mid Level Professional Award for Jess Raymond. I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Jess for the past year and a half. I first met Jess when she came to the University of Central Florida (UCF) campus for an interview two years ago. I remember her being full of energy and passion for the field of housing and residence life. That same energy is still exhibited in every endeavor that she embarks upon.

Jess is currently working in her second year as an Assistant Director in the Department of Housing and Residence Life overseeing all annual facilities. During this time, I have served as his direct supervisor. I cannot say enough about Jess's performance. She does an outstanding job with respect to her position. Diligent, fastidious, dependable, and genuine are words that characterize her. Combine this personality with her unrelenting willingness to lend a helping hand and her reluctance to say no, and you have one fantastic professional!

Jess can be likened to the Energizer Bunny, she keeps going and going!!! Jess has a position like no other I can think of in the field of housing and residence life. She oversees three very distinct types of housing operations. On a daily basis she must carefully balance the needs of all stakeholders. She works with 2500 students and staff living in our Affiliated Housing - Pegasus Landing. This housing resulted from a transaction that vested ownership of privately owned apartment complex in a non-profit governmental corporation and conveyed the land at no cost to the university's charitable foundation. Pegasus Landing is dually staffed by UCF Department of Housing and Residence Life and the private company, College Park Communities, Inc. She oversees 2000 students and staff living in our Affiliated Housing – Towers at Golden Knights Plaza. This housing arrangement is direct service organization (DSO) on the University of Central Florida campus that is managed and operated by the university. Towers at Golden Knights Plaza is dually staffed by UCF Department of Housing and Residence Life and the private company, University Properties International (UPI). Lastly, Jess oversees our satellite campus facilities, housing 400 students and staff that are forty-five minutes from the main campus. This too, is direct service organization (DSO) that is managed and operated by the university. Owned by the DSO, it is operated by the university through the Department of Housing of Residence Life.

As you can imagine blending the public and private world is not without its issues. Jess has worked extremely hard to cultivate relationships and work with these companies focusing on student development and customer service. Her ability to tackle issues with both students and parents and make them feel comfortable and more at ease is commendable. As we know the student or parent often goes straight to the president of the institution, who in turn sends it back to the departmental level to handle. Jess is an outstanding ambassador representing top administration with her follow-up in these situations.

If you were to walk around the communities she oversees, you might think she is a movie star, at least among our student staff. She genuinely shows an interest in getting to know the students, and goes out of her way to acknowledge their positive actions and accomplishments. She has the ability to make every student she meets feel confident and secure. Jess's peers know they can always count on her to lend a helping hand. Jess has developed the keen ability to predict what is required for upcoming events, and go above and beyond to prepare all that is needed.

As I reflect upon Jess's strengths and abilities as a supervisor the following comes to mind: team player; creative in efforts to educate others; commitment to honoring diversity; unconditional support, always volunteering when extra assistance is needed. Jess is a self-motivated individual who exhibits great care and concern for others. She always follows through on whatever is asked of her. She has never failed to meet a deadline for any assignment or job responsibility that has been given to her, usually passing things in early.

Jess is a wonderful role model to the staff she oversees, the residents living in the facilities she supervises, and to me. Her unconditional dedication to the growth of students and staff here at UCF has benefited us all. Her daily commitment to making students and staffs lives better make her most deserving of the SEAHO Mid Level Professional Award. Her well-rounded efforts at mentoring staff, constantly looking for ways to improve the department, and down to earth genuineness, make me thankful every day we hired her two years ago. She has my highest recommendation.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeff Novak

Jeff Novak
Associate Director
Department of Housing and Residence Life
University of Central Florida
PO Box 163222
Orlando, FL
32816-3222