September 15, 2009

Committee,

It is my pleasure to be writing a letter of support for Mr. Rob Hall to be the recipient of **The James C. Grimm Outstanding New Professional Award.** It has been my pleasure to work with Mr. Hall as a colleague for the past three years. Mr. Hall is the Manager for Housing Operations for Housing and Residential Communities (HRC) here at the University of Alabama. Rob began his work with us three years ago and has not stopped working to make students lives more secure, comfortable and sensible. He has helped us develop relationships across our Division of Student Affairs and the University. He handles everything from new key systems, to managing our facility needs, to planning and organizing Week of Welcome events for our incoming students. Needless to say this is a bit of a handful for any professional. Rob does not require a pat on the back or any special recognition. It amazes me that he can find the energy to do all the things that he gets done in a single workday.

The main reason that I wanted to nominate Mr. Hall for this award is a bit outside of the normal day to day operations of work. Rob is one of the rare professionals in our field who has the ability to view the facility/residence hall operation as it relates to student development. I know many professionals on both sides who can only see their particular interest. One of our greatest challenges in Residential Communities is getting our Community Directors and Resident Advisors to see facility management a shared responsibility. Rob jumps into student development and educative moments with both feet. I see him do this through his work with our student ‘ready’/facilities crew. He works with 10-15 students throughout the year who all have very different backgrounds and needs. Rob acts as a resource for these students and helps them be successful in and out of the classroom. He teaches them responsibility, work ethic, and how to be a positive member of their community. We have started to send him many of our judicial and students in need to work with because he is so skilled at helping them find their niche within our campus. One student who was in a great deal of crisis over the summer was referred to Rob from our Counseling Center. Rob took this young man under his wing and gave him projects that would help him gain some confidence. By the end of the summer this young man was a LEADER amongst his peers on the crew and was BEAMING with pride about his involvement in a renovation project. I am not sure he would identify himself as an educator on most days but out of all the critical work that he provides for us I think this is among the most important for our students. All of this is particularly impressive when you consider that we are a housing operation of over 7,000 residents on a campus of over 28,000 students. It is very difficult to have those kinds of impacts on a campus this large.

Rob and his crew led the department this past August in our move-in efforts. He secured over 900 volunteers from the campus and Tuscaloosa community and we had the smoothest opening that I can remember on any campus I have been on. We received accolades from residents, parents, and our president Dr. Robert Witt. His leadership and hard work are invaluable. We are much better student development practitioners because of his hard work and dedication. Please let me know if you have further questions about Mr. Hall’s nomination at (205) 348-4708.

W. Ross Bryan