December 16, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with pride that I offer this recommendation for Shawnboda Mead for the James C. Grimm Outstanding New Professional in Housing/Residence Life Award. Shawnboda has worked in the Department of Residence Life at The University of Southern Mississippi as an Assistant Director for the First-Year Area since July of 2007. She is a valuable asset to our department and she truly makes the effort to develop each of the staff members and students that she works with on a personal level. She has a true grasp of the importance of development and models this well for everyone.

Shawnboda has taken ownership of the desk program throughout campus and has implemented a 24-hour desk staffing plan within the first semester of being on staff as a response to campus safety concerns. She has also taken the initiative to ensure that the staff was trained and has streamlined the hiring and staffing processes. She coordinates 16 residence hall desk operations.

Shawnboda has an excellent approach to supervising undergraduates, graduate students, and professional staff members. There is a good balance between accountability and development and she naturally earns the respect of her staff as well as her co-workers as a result of her approach. Members of the department have commented on how valuable she is a staff resource how much that is appreciated.

Shawnboda has made a tremendous effort to connect with all of her student staff members, RAs as well as HDs and AHDs. She attends staff meetings, has interactions with staff members at lunch, and has a real presence in her buildings. Her residents know her and connect with her on a personal level and she takes the opportunity to get to know as many people as possible on campus. Additionally, campus colleagues in other departments seek input from Shawnboda and value her involvement on many different campus committees and strategic planning meetings and retention initiatives through campus-wide programming.

One of Shawnboda’s strength areas comes in the form of student organization advising. NRHH has had many accomplishments throughout the past two years and has really developed into a strong, regional and national award-winning organization. Shawnboda took the initiative to basically re-build the organization from the ground up. During her first year there was an increase in over 200% with OTM submissions from the previous year. Shawnboda has been instrumental in helping this organization transition to a new advisor this fall and she has assumed the role of advising the student tutoring program in the residence halls.

Programming for first-year students on campus with a strategic retention focus has been outstanding. The new programming initiative was very successful and I expect that our retention this fall in comparison with last will show an improvement. A program was implemented that focused on the first twelve weeks of class. Two programs were presented by professional staff each week and supplementary programs with the same focus were presented by the student staff throughout each week. The resident response was tremendous and each of the programs was very successful.

In closing, Shawnboda is a valuable asset to our department and our students. The growth that she has experienced in the past two years as a new professional is tremendous and has impacted our students and staff positively. The way she came into our department, adapted, and took initiative can only be exemplified by excellent education, strong work ethic, and a true passion for what she does. Shawnboda will be successful as she advances in the residence life profession and for each of the above reasons it is my privilege, to not only nominate this individual for this award but to know her on a personal and professional level. If you have any questions about this nomination or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at [Stephanie.roy@usm.edu](mailto:Stephanie.roy@usm.edu) or at 601-266-5561.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Roy

Associate Director of Residence Life

The University of Southern Mississippi