January 7, 2010

SEAHO Awards Committe

Gay Perez, Committee Chair:

Please accept this letter of nomination for the SEAHO Service Award for Sarah Elizabeth May. Sarah has served as a Residence Director (RD) at Meredith College from July 2005 – May 2009 and as the Apartment Manager from May 2009 – present. I have been her direct supervisor during her time at Meredith.

At Meredith College, Residence Directors (RDs) are bachelor-level professional staff who live among residents in a residence hall. They provide information about campus events, act as a resource for campus offices, offer counseling to students, and foster a living-learning environment in their halls. Other roles of the RD include that of college representative, administrator, first responder for crises, hire, train, evaluate and supervise Resident Assistants, and serve as a role model and team member. As Apartment Manager, her responsibilities are very similar to those of an RD but her work also includes a higher level of administrative duties in her current role.

Sarah has shown consistent work in all areas of the RD position and more recently as the new Apartment Manager. She works to provide a strong community among her residents, she makes herself regularly available for assistance, she is timely in getting paperwork done and she goes above and beyond in being a team member. Additionally, Sarah serves as a solid role model for not only her residents and Resident Assistants, but also for her fellow RDs and the campus community as a whole.

In addition to the “regular” duties of being a full-time, live-in staff member, this year Sarah transitioned from being an RD to the Apartment Manager for our newly built on-campus apartments which opened August 1, 2009. Although she officially started as the Apartment Manager in May 2009, she served on the Apartment Life Planning Committee throughout 2008 -2009 and began working on the transition during the spring 2009 semester.

Once she fully took on the Apartment Manager responsibilities, her attention to detail and efforts to ensure the building was on track for opening as well as working with the residents to make a move-in plan was impeccable. Sarah is very detail-oriented and not only sees a concern, but offers suggestions to address the concern. Overall, her hard work laid a solid foundation for the new apartments to open and her efforts are highly regarded by me, the Dean of Students and Vice President for College Programs.

As a team member, Sarah is supportive of other Residence Directors as well as me. She helps to create a cohesive team of the apartment staff she supervises. Her staff can go to her for advice related to career and academic goals as well as personal concerns. She has led her staff to make the apartments a positive community where residents feel comfortable in their new living environment. She lends a hand when she is able to which makes her fellow staff, and myself, appreciate her helpfulness.

To gain experience outside of residence life, Sarah has sought opportunities throughout the Meredith campus not only to build her skill set, but to also support the various programs and events that help to develop girls and women. One of the highlights of her work includes serving as the director for the college’s Girls Leadership Institute, a weeklong leadership program held in the summer for approximately 20 junior high school girls. She took on coordinating this program in spring 2007 and has continued with that program since.

Other experiences Sarah has had in relation to the development of students include presenting at the annual High School Women’s Leadership Conference, assisting with and presenting at the LEAD Conference sponsored by the North Carolina College Personnel Association, presenting programs during Looking Toward College, a program for high school sophomores and juniors, and serving as a First Year Experience instructor for four years. She has served on both the North Carolina Housing Officers and North Carolina College Personnel Association Executive Boards holding positions as Small College and University Representative and Member at Large, respectively.

Sarah is very motivated to provide excellent service to students, parents and the general campus community and is an outstanding employee. With that being said, I highly recommend her for the SEAHO Service Award. Her professionalism, enthusiasm for housing and residence life, work ethic and solid foundation of experiences are deserving of this recognition.

Respectfully,

Heidi LeCount

Director of Residence Life