

AN EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
PROCESS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS PRESENTLY
UTILIZED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT HOUSING
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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ROBERT JOHN SHEA



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PROCESS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS PRESENTLY
UTILIZED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT HOUSING
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND*

BY

ROBERT JOHN SHEA

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Abstract

This project examines the process for performance appraisal of resident assistant paraprofessionals employed by the Department of Student Housing and Food Services, Office of Student Affairs and Services, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. The purpose of this project is to determine if the stated objectives of the performance appraisal process for paraprofessionals are consistent with the current literature examined. The following aspects of the appraisal system are evaluated: (1) preparation for appraisal; (2) data collection; (3) reporting and follow-up; (4) evaluation of the policy; and (5) impact of the process.

Through the analysis of information provided by the Residence Life Office of Student Housing and a review of corresponding mission statements and objectives, a number of conclusions were reached. First, the present performance appraisal system is meeting it's stated objective of assisting the administration in it's responsibility for ensuring that resident assistants are performing the tasks assigned. Secondly, it was evidenced by data reviewed that the performance appraisal process presently utilized is effective. Thirdly, there are indications that personal development is a goal of the evaluation process utilized.

Overall, the performance appraisal process is meeting its intended objectives. The process may, however, warrant further development with respect to the incorporation of student development objectives.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
 CHAPTER I	
Introduction	9
Statement of the Problem	12
Rationale of the Study	16
Definition of Terms	18
Resident Assistant	18
Proctor	19
Student Development	19
Performance Appraisal	19
Limitations	19
Delimitations	20
 CHAPTER II	
Review of Related Literature	21
Introduction	21
Dimensions of Performance Appraisal	21
Purpose	22
Components	24
Criteria	25
Methods of Measurement	27
Data for Measurement	30
Process of Appraisal	30
Choice of Appraiser	31
Appraisal Instruments	34
Conferencing	37
Appraisal Interviews	38
Appraisal Training	40
Assessment Period and Timing	41
Outcomes of Appraisal	42
Application to Residence Environment	43
Student Development	45

Conclusion	48
CHAPTER III	
Design of the Study	50
Data Collection	50
Procedure	52
Data Analysis	53
CHAPTER IV	
Analysis and Discussion of Data	59
Preparation for Appraisal	59
Organizational Goals and Objectives	59
Organizational Structure	61
Job Descriptions	63
Purposes of Appraisal	66
Criteria	67
Data Collection	68
Reporting of Information and Follow-up	71
Performance Review	73
Assessment of Appraisal System	74
CHAPTER V	
Summary, Results, Conclusions and Recommendations	76
Summary	76
Interpretation of Results	78
Job Functions and Expectations	78
Data Presently Utilized	79
Provision of Stated Goals for Evaluation	80
Criteria Utilized for Evaluation	81
Conclusions	82
Recommendations	83
References	85

APPENDIX A:	Resident Assistant Position Description and Employment Contract	100
APPENDIX B:	Resident Assistant Evaluation Form	118
APPENDIX C:	Resident Assistant Evaluations	121
APPENDIX D:	Approval/Permission Letters	131

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Systems Model for Performance Appraisal	57
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The historical development of residence halls began in Europe during the twelfth century. During this century two basic educational systems emerged which had a major impact on higher education - specifically, the English and German systems.

Fredericksen (1992) writes that the English educational system is represented by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. This system is based on a residential college system committed to the education and development of the total student. The German system is based on instruction and research, with a concentration on creating the finest centres for scholarship and leaving the living arrangements to the individual students.

The development of the American model of higher education brought with it the beginning of collegiate housing. The founding of Harvard College in 1636 signalled the beginning of the first of three phases in the development of student housing in the United States. This phase was strongly influenced by the experiences of those individuals from the New England area who had been predominately educated at Oxford and Cambridge. As Fredericksen (1992) notes, the English pattern of the residence unit being the centre of both

informal and formal education became the organizational standard of the American college. Other influences as, noted by Cowley (1934), included the fact that students often had to travel long distances and their parents were supportive of having them under the watchful eye of university officials. The concept of *in loco parentis* was particularly predominant during this period.

The second phase in the development of student housing in the United States lasted from the end of the American Civil War (1865) to the early 1900's. Within this phase the German influence flourished. Educators who travelled to, and were educated in German universities, returned and denounced the belief that housing students was the responsibility of the university. Cowley (1934) suggests that a number of reasons led to the decline of the belief in the English model. These reasons included student-faculty conflicts, and a temporary decline of the living unit as an extension of the classroom. With the 1850's came decrees from university presidents that the importance and proclivity of university housing was negligible. President Tappan of Michigan stated, in his first report to the Board of Regents (1853), that:

...the dormitory system is objectionable in itself. By withdrawing young men from the influence of domestic circles and forming them into a separate community, they are often led

to contract evil habits, and are prone to fall into disorderly conduct. The difficulties of maintaining a proper discipline are thus greatly increased. It is a mere remnant of the monkish cloisters of the middle ages, still retained in England indeed, but banished from the universities of Germany. (p. 11-12)

The third phase in the continued development of student housing in the United States, saw a re-emergence of the collegiate housing environment. According to Cowley (1934), factors such as the overcrowding and inadequacy of rooming houses, the dissatisfaction of students and their parents with the quality of off-campus housing, and the increased interest on the part of students in extra-curricular activities resulted in a resurgence of the residential college.

With the end of World War II college enrolments increased dramatically. The major shortage of collegiate housing and the desire for a fast solution resulted in the development of dormitory style living arrangements. The dormitories were built to accommodate the maximum number of students with little or no regard for students' educational experiences and personal development.

As housing capacities began to catch up with increasing enrolments in the 1970's, the concern for maximizing the educational experience of those

students living in residence received more attention from housing and student affairs professionals. It is ascribed through many mission statements of housing departments that they seek to provide students with low cost, safe, sanitary, and comfortable living accommodations and to promote students' intellectual, social, moral and physical development. Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt (1991) contend that collegiate housing facilities and programs can and do influence the quality of students' educational experiences and personal development. Fredericksen (1992) indicates that there is a renewed emphasis on the integration of residential living as an integral part of the educational experience of students. This emphasis is grown out of the movement that created a philosophy of student development. Through this renewed appreciation for residence living emerged a need to ensure that residences are not only administered effectively but that the paraprofessionals working there are provided the opportunities for personal and professional development as resident students and student employees respectively.

Statement of the Problem

Winston & Ender (1988) indicate, based on a sampling of four year colleges in the United States of America, that nearly 95 percent of housing programs reported using paraprofessional staff. With the continued importance

placed on these paraprofessional staff, a number of key human resource functions must be incorporated. The parameters of resident assistant selection, training, supervision, and education are of critical importance. Winston & Fitch (1993) consider the first component in creating effective resident assistant programs as a system of fair, explicit, and valid evaluation of work performance.

There presently exists a performance appraisal system to monitor the performance of resident assistants in the residence housing environments of Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, here after referred to as Memorial. This evaluation system has never been systematically evaluated or assessed as to its success in monitoring the effectiveness of employee performance or personal development.

The purpose of this project is to assess the performance appraisal process for resident assistants in the Department of Student Housing at Memorial in light of five dimensions proposed by Ondrack & Oliver (1986) to determine the extent to which the model used reflects current thought and practice in the field. For each dimension within the D. Ondrack and C. Oliver model, a number of relevant questions are applied to the appraisal systems under investigation to determine the degree to which the critical components are present.

These questions are:

(1) Purpose Dimension

- (a) To what extent does the appraisal system for resident assistants currently in place at Memorial reflect a clear philosophy; more specifically, does the appraisal system indicate:
 - i) Why it is necessary to evaluate resident assistants?

and
 - ii) What, specifically does the department want to achieve with the evaluation of resident assistants?

(2) Student Development Dimension

- (a) To what extent do the stated or implied purposes of the model used at Memorial reflect a concern for student development?
 - i) What, if any, components or practices focus on student development, and in what ways?

(3) Components Dimension

- (a) Type of Criteria
 - i) What types of criteria are utilized to assess what makes a resident assistant effective?
 - ii) Does the evaluation model distinguish between presage, process and product criteria?

(b) Methods of Measurement

- i) What methods are utilized to measure resident assistant effectiveness?

(c) Data for Measurement

- i) From where should the information for assessing resident assistant effectiveness be solicited?

(4) Process Dimension

- (a) Does the evaluation/appraisal model outline clear procedures for the evaluation of resident assistants? More specifically, does it indicate:
 - i) Who evaluates performance?
 - ii) What methods are used for data collection?
 - iii) What kind of documents are used?
 - iv) How information is fed back to the resident assistant?
 - v) If the model provides for training in the conduct of appraisal?
 - vi) How often appraisal is to be conducted?
 - vii) If timing is to be fixed or based on need?
 - viii) If evaluation is considered to be a continuous or discontinuous process.

(5) Outcomes Dimension

- (a) How is the evaluation system assessed?
- (b) Is there a mechanism to determine if the appraisal is achieving what it is intended to achieve?

Rationale of the Study

Within an age of fiscal restraint and the continued review of effectiveness and efficiency of programs, university housing departments are revisiting the notion of utilizing paraprofessional staff. Winston & Fitch (1993) contend that effective residence assistant programs require the commitment of substantial resources by housing departments. Utilization of professional staff in the recruitment, selection and training components of the resident assistant programs is only one such cost. An even larger issue than that of cost is one of student development. Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) state that living on campus maximizes opportunities for social, cultural, and extracurricular involvement that often account for student development opportunities. The need for these opportunities to enhance a student's development is critical if the university housing department is to attain its mission statement.

The role of resident assistant provides an opportunity to assist in the development of well refined leadership skills. These skills should assist in the development of more effective housing environments and in the continued development of the paraprofessional.

The use of paraprofessionals, according to Winston & Fitch (1993), began when it was apparent to those responsible for operating housing facilities that there were not enough "adults" available to oversee what was happening with students. The use of paraprofessionals at Memorial has grown to include a total of 79 resident assistants, academic dons, and proctors. Resident assistants account for approximately 67 of these positions.

With an increase in the presence of paraprofessionals, especially resident assistants, the call for greater accountability by senior administrators, and the desire to enhance the quality of student life, it is imperative that housing departments ensure that resident assistants are assisted both professionally and personally to develop the required skills. Warner (1986) notes that an abundance of literature exists regarding performance appraisals for college presidents, deans and faculty; however, there is a void in the literature when considering residence hall paraprofessionals.

For this reason, and to ensure that the most effective process of performance appraisal is implemented, a study of the present appraisal system

within the Department of Student Housing at Memorial is warranted. The benefits of an effective performance appraisal system include the improvement of employee performance, improvement of communication within the organization, improved teamwork, and human resource development.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this project consistent reference will be made to a number of terms which will have particular importance. The following terms are defined for the purpose of ensuring consistency:

Resident Assistant

A student who is selected, trained, and supervised in assuming responsibilities and performing tasks that are intended to: (1) directly promote the individual personal development of his or her peers; (2) foster the creation and maintenance of environments that stimulate and support residents' personal and educational development; and (3) perform tasks that ensure the maintenance of secure, clean, healthy, psychologically safe, and aesthetically pleasing living accommodations.

Proctor

A university employee selected and trained to ensure university rules and regulations are adhered to after hours in the assigned university residence. The individual is responsible for the housing needs of residents and the supervision of all paraprofessionals.

Student Development

A term which emphasizes the development of young adults in five primary domains: intellectual development, moral development, psychosocial development, ego development, and career development. This concept emphasizes the adult status of university students and their interaction with their environment (Winston & Anchors, 1994).

Performance Appraisal

The process of assessing the performance of an employee in relation to the organization's goals and objectives, keeping in mind the purpose of personal and organizational development.

Limitations

The points outlined below are seen as limitations throughout this study:

- (1) the performance appraisal process studied has existed for only two semesters, as a result, there have not been any internal modifications;
- (2) there has been no research completed on the satisfaction of participants in the process;
- (3) a lack of literature surrounding the area of performance appraisal for resident assistants makes it difficult in making suitable comparisons with other programs; and
- (4) inherent in the responsibility of being a resident assistant is the fact that those performing the performance appraisal cannot directly be observed by supervisors.

Delimitations

The following delimitations are acknowledged in the study:

- (1) this study was limited to the process presently utilized at Memorial University for performance appraisal of resident assistants; and
- (2) the study was limited to the process utilized for one group of paraprofessionals in the housing department, namely resident assistants.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The review of literature presented here focuses on issues surrounding performance appraisal in general, with specific reference to the performance appraisal of educational personnel and paraprofessionals. The lack of research on performance appraisal of resident assistants in a university setting makes it necessary to concentrate on concepts used in the evaluation of educational personnel and paraprofessionals in other organizations as a theoretical framework for this project. The literature review then examines the research on such issues as purposes of evaluation, methods of data collection (i.e., appraisal instruments), the criteria of appraisal, choice of appraisers, training or appraisers or evaluators, and the assessment of the appraisal system itself. The integration of the appraisal system itself, and the concept of student development and its importance to the overall purpose and process of appraisal are also reviewed.

Dimensions of Performance Appraisal

The first dimension focuses on the purpose of performance appraisal.

Purpose, in this regard, includes the philosophy and objectives of the performance appraisal system currently in place for evaluating resident assistants.

The second dimension includes the major components of the appraisal process for resident assistants. The components include the types of criteria used for the effective appraisal of paraprofessional staff and the method of measurement used to determine the effectiveness of resident assistants.

Another component includes the data for measurement. This component will focus on where information for assessing effectiveness of resident assistants comes from given the uniqueness of paraprofessional duties.

The third dimension is the process employed to measure performance of paraprofessional residence staff. Main issues under this component include the choice of an appraiser, appraisal instruments to be utilized, appraisal interviews, appraisal training, assessment period and timing.

The fourth dimension is outcome. This review will include two specific components. The first is the evaluation of outcomes and the second includes the congruence of these outcomes with the stated purposes.

Purpose

The concept of evaluation has existed for many years. Swan (1991) quoted the Chinese philosopher Sin Yu as stating that the Imperial Rater of nine grades seldom rates men according to their merits, but always according to his likes and dislikes (Swan, 1992, p. 3).

Ondrack & Oliver (1986) state a number of purposes of performance appraisal. They classify all the purposes into two broad categories: evaluation and development. Specifically, the primary purposes include: monitoring and control; feedback and development; compensation administration; promotion, retention, tenure and transfers; human resources program and planning; and organizational accountability.

Warner (1986) implies that the literature does not explicitly address the notion of a philosophy of appraisal. The philosophy of a particular evaluation system is often revealed by a number of statements regarding the overall purposes of appraisal. Sims & Foxley (1980) state that performance appraisal systems have two overriding purposes or objectives; 1) the measurement of performance; and 2) the development and improvement of performance. Other important purposes for performance appraisal of teachers are reported as helping supervisors make more informed decisions regarding personnel issues and to ensure that duties performed are consistent with institutional objectives

(Fortunato & Waddell, 1985). A final purpose is to provide supervisors with information regarding their supervisory effectiveness (Warner, 1986, p. 196).

Natriello (1990), Millman & Darling-Hammond (1990), and Strike (1993) review purposes and beliefs regarding appraisal to provide a philosophy of the performance appraisal process utilized. The research purports that the three most important purposes of appraisal are the concepts of accountability, improvement, and support.

Components

Throughout the past decade a great deal of light has been shed on the development of effective performance appraisal particularly in the primary, elementary, and high school systems. The literature purports that the main beneficiary of this process are the children involved (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1990; Ender, 1984; Forsyth, 1983; Knouse & Rodgers, 1981). In the context of the residence environment the main beneficiaries is the student residents. On the one hand, student resident assistants or paraprofessionals may be likened to teachers whose performance is appraised. The resident, on the other hand, may be compared to the student in a classroom who is equally influenced by the performance appraisal.

This section will provide an overview of three major components of the performance appraisal process as summarized in the literature reviewed (Lawton, Hickcox, Leithwood & Mussella, 1986; Murray, 1981; Sashkin, 1981). The components are criteria, methods of measurement, and data for measurement.

Criteria

The review of criteria will incorporate two key questions. The first will consider what makes a resident assistant effective and the second will consider why it is so hard to define resident assistant effectiveness.

To answer the first question a number of factors may make a resident assistant effective. From a survey of literature (Upcraft & Pilato, 1982; Forsyth, 1983; Winston, Ullom, & Werring, 1984; Blimling & Miltenberger, 1990; Winston & Fitch, 1993), the following six roles are associated with being an effective resident assistant. They include: being an effective role model to other students; fostering community development; providing system maintenance and control; supplying leadership and governance; acting as a helper/facilitator; and contributing or assisting with educational programming. This list is not all inclusive but does provide the critical factors desired of effective resident assistants.

Ondrack & Oliver (1986) relate the difficulty of considering what makes a teacher effective as pertaining to two issues, complexity and context. Complexity refers to the availability and exercise of diverse means for the attainment of a single end, pupil progress (p. 13). This notion of complexity may be applied to the position or role of resident assistants. There is a general consensus in the literature (Blimling, 1993; Winston & Anchors, 1993) that the resident assistant role is complex. The development of a number of effective processes to achieve the ultimate goal of student development among students in general proves difficult in establishing common criteria that distinguish between good, bad and marginal resident assistants.

The second problem in identifying valid criteria for resident assistant effectiveness is the contextual environment. Factors that affect the link between student development and resident assistant effectiveness include the personal characteristics of residents such as motivation, socioeconomic status, and career maturity; residence climate and culture; conflicting expectations of different constituencies such as residents, other paraprofessional staff, and housing office staff (Kuh, Schuh & Whitt, 1991).

Three types of general criteria utilized for assessing resident assistant effectiveness include presage criteria, process oriented criteria and output oriented criteria (Warner, 1986). The concept of presage criteria includes

characteristics with which the resident assistant comes to the job, including personal and professional characteristics (Baird, Beatty, & Schneier, 1982; Fortunato & Waddell, 1981). The second type of criteria most commonly found in the literature includes process oriented criteria which includes supervisory methods, behaviours, and techniques, and resident assistant - resident relationships. The third and final criteria includes output oriented criteria which are based on student development, changes in resident behaviour and resident development as a positive component of the university culture (Strange, 1993).

Methods of Measurement

The residence structure provides for a number of inherent problems in the measurement of resident assistant effectiveness. The measurement issue attempts to explain how we can actually tell if the resident assistant's performance is effective. There are many methods reviewed in the literature, however, a number of specific methods emerge. The more widely indicated methods include traits (personality characteristics), performance/behaviour, skills and competence, management by objectives, and clinical supervision. Each of these methods is employed by itself or in a series of combinations depending on the agency involved.

Traits as a method of measurement provides an assessment on the basis of personality characteristics. Resident assistants are evaluated more on the basis of non-specifics such as enthusiasm rather than on activities that can be objectively measured without subjectivity and prone to appraiser bias (Winston & Fitch, 1993).

The use of performance-based data and/or behaviour as a method of measuring performance is often referenced in the literature (Upcraft & Pilato, 1982). Measurement in this context is designed to measure actions or behaviour. Ondrack & Oliver (1986) consider performance-based or behavioural data to possess the greatest potential for validity, reliability, discrimination, and receptivity (p. 11). Although this approach is more time consuming, the reliability and ability to provide concrete feedback to the resident assistant may be more effective (Warner, 1986).

The third method of measurement is the utilization of skills and competencies (Ondrack & Oliver, 1986). This method can only measure the potential of the resident assistant to perform. As a result of discussions with professionals in the field of appraisal of resident assistants, it was learned that during the past decade many university housing offices have attempted to develop a list of these skills and competencies to utilize in rating forms or checklists (S. Perry-Maidment, personal communication, 1995; & B. Johnston,

personal communication, 1995). Progress has been made in developing a comprehensive list of competency statements that can be related to performance of resident assistants. The list, however, is far from exhaustive.

Management by objectives or goal setting is the fourth method of measurement commonly referred to in the literature (Mable & DeCoster, 1980). This method depends on the use of a set of mutually agreed upon goals or objectives that serve as the benchmark for employee performance. This method appears to be utilized by many supervisors in collaboration with other approaches. The ability to use mutually agreed upon goals/objectives provides an interactive process that can provide a positive environment for future personal and organizational development (Blimling & Miltenberger, 1990; Ender, 1984; Hersey & Blanchard, 1984).

The fifth method is clinical supervision. This approach uses as its basis a democratic, interactive approach to the improvement of participants. As applied to resident assistant performance it consists of three major activities: pre-planning conference, residence observation, and post-planning conference. The objectives of clinical supervision are professional development, objective feedback, skill development, and the diagnosis of performance problems. Acheson & Gall (1980) consider it a valued tool for formative evaluation.

Warner (1986) recommends the pre- and post-planning conference as elements of an effective performance appraisal of resident assistants (p. 12).

Data for Measurement

A final component of appraisal concerns sources of data for measurement. The information for assessing resident assistant effectiveness comes from two potential sources. The first includes residence observation and the second is non-residence activities (i.e.; volunteer work off campus).

Eichenfield, Graves, Slief & Haslund (1988) consider the use of direct observation of the resident assistant to be a method which requires due consideration. Fine (1990) argues that a potential stumbling block is the fact that the resident assistant's work environment is not conducive to direct observation as is a classroom.

Process of Appraisal

Ondrack & Oliver (1986) view the process of appraisal as the mechanics of how appraisal is conducted. They consider the five major aspects to include: choice of appraiser, appraisal instruments, appraisal interviews, appraisal training and assessment period and timing as critical components of the performance appraisal process for teachers. Consistently, throughout the literature reviewed concerning resident assistant performance

appraisal, these five aspects were evident (Warner, 1986). These five aspects are considered as critical elements of the process of appraisal for resident assistants.

Choice of Appraiser

The choice of appraiser is imperative to an effective and proper evaluation. The key question is who should appraise and evaluate the resident assistant's performance. A survey of the literature pertaining to higher education in general suggests that when examining performance appraisals for non-academic middle management administrators, evaluation data should be gathered at least from one up and one down on the organizational hierarchy (Farmer, 1979).

It appears that the choice of appraiser depends to an extent on the desired outcomes of the appraisal process. If the desired outcome is formative in nature, then the appraisal process should include self-appraisal. If the purpose is summative in nature, then the supervisor is assumed to make the decisions (Fortunato & Waddell, 1981). Other methods include peers, subordinates, and expert outsiders. Utilization of each of these has advantages and disadvantages.

The most common appraiser is the individual supervisor. The advantages associated with using the supervisor as appraiser include accountability for the subordinate and responsibility for personnel decisions. The choice of the immediate supervisor as the appraiser may also foster supervisor-appraiser interaction and communication (Lawton, Hickcox, Leithwood & Musella, 1986). There are also disadvantages. These disadvantages include a measure of discomfort between both parties as to the implied possibility of the supervisor making major decisions regarding the appraisee's future. A second and more important concern is the possibility of evaluator bias and subjectivity (Ondrack & Oliver, 1986).

A second possible choice for appraiser is "self" as in self appraisal. Potential advantages include the suitability for developmental purposes, and encouragement for self-growth and motivation (Karant, 1989; and Hofmann, Jacobs & Gerras, 1992). Disadvantages associated with self-appraisal include the fact that the results are unsuitable for making personnel decisions, and there is a tendency towards bias and distortion.

The third possible choice for evaluator includes the use of peers or fellow professionals. The advantages of utilizing peers include their ability to provide relevant input and their inclination to take into account the practical constraints of day-to-day work situations (Norton, 1992). A disadvantage is

that peer group pressures may provide bias or distortion. As well, to utilize peers as possible performance evaluators, the ability to rearrange schedules and timetables to provide the time to complete the appraisals may restrict the evaluators (Eichenfield, Graves, Slief, & Haslund, 1988).

A fourth possible source of appraisal may include a student resident of the residence in which the resident assistant works. The literature regarding the advantages of such a situation for teaching staff and their students relates that the only significant purpose is to be developmental (Harte & Dibbon, 1992). A similar result would be expected if one applies the concept to a residence setting (Warner, 1986).

Disadvantages of using resident students in the appraisal of resident assistants are that they provide inconclusive evidence with respect to predictive validity, and the potential for bias is overwhelming when this type of appraiser is used by itself (Bretz, Milkovich, & Read, 1992).

A fifth choice of appraiser is the expert outsider. The advantages of utilizing outside experts include the validity and objectivity of appraisal, the potential for valuable expert feedback, the ability to resolve appraiser-appraisee conflict, and the ability to save supervisor time in providing feedback (Cummings & Schwab, 1973).

There are also disadvantages inherent in this choice including the increased expense of bringing in outside evaluators. The use of a third party often discourages meaningful interaction between supervisor and subordinate (Cummings & Schwab, 1973).

As stated by Ondrack & Oliver (1986), no research to date has provided conclusive evidence on the relative empirical validity of these five sources. Research does indicate, however, that the use of multiple sources of evidence tends to increase the validity and reliability of the appraisal results and reduce judgement error and bias. Indeed, as Baird, Beatty, & Schneider (1982) state, human judgement, unavoidable in appraisal, is often fallible and influenced by factors other than the behaviour of those being rated (p. xi). Fortunato & Waddell (1981) describe one such judgement bias as the halo effect. This judgement error is defined as the fact that a supervisor may be so attracted or repelled by a single aspect of the subordinates performance that his judgement concerning all other areas is clouded (Dartnell Management Guide, 1976, p. 1). As noted above, the sources of appraisal play a very important role in the administration of the performance appraisal process.

Appraisal Instruments

The process dimension includes the issue of which instruments should be employed to appraise the performance of employees. The literature explores four specific options. They include checklists, narratives, rating scales, and goal oriented instruments (Ondrack & Oliver, 1986, p. 179).

Blake & deMont (1990), Bradley (1990) and Fine (1992), consider the checklist as a list of statements describing specific traits or behaviours beside which the appraiser is asked to check which are applicable to a particular employee or observed by the appraiser. A prevailing problem with the use of this instrument is its inability to accurately provide for timely reflection or careful analysis. There also exists a tendency for the observer to make routine observations without careful thought or consideration (Fine, 1990, p. 34). Checklists do, however, provide direction to specific aspects of the behaviours of employees being observed.

The second instrument commonly utilized is the narrative. This technique is a written report of the appraisee's strengths, weaknesses, or future potential (Winston & Anchors, 1994). This approach is often favoured when combined with other approaches, but least favoured by itself. It is anticipated that this approach would provide reflective and meaningful information regarding the developmental components of the resident assistant (Winston &

Anchors, 1993, p. 40). This method is rarely utilized as a sole method of evaluation.

Rating scales provide the third instrument most often used to measure performance of staff. Rating scales according to Bretz, Milkovich, & Read (1992), are the most common instrument utilized in the measurement of performance. Rating scales are based on the rating of various characteristics of the individual's performance along a graphic scale or continuum. The pure Behaviourally Anchored Rating Scale (B.A.R.S.) is one of the most common methods (Knouse & Rodger, 1991, p. 397). Behavioural rating scales are more useful for appraisal feedback purposes than simple judgemental rating scales which tend to be used more for evaluation purposes.

The goal oriented instrument is used when the method of measurement for appraisal and evaluation is goal setting (Ondrack & Oliver, 1986, p. 103). Ondrack & Oliver (1986) indicate that goal oriented instruments usually provide space for one or more of the following:

- (1) identifying the goals to be achieved;
- (2) specifying how the goals will be accomplished;
- (3) describing or rating the extent to which the goals have been achieved;
- (4) providing evidence of progress toward goals; and/or

- (5) identifying personal or organizational factors which impede or facilitate goal accomplishment. (p. 16)

The findings of a massive research project undertaken by the Wyatt Company (1992) on the performance appraisal practices in 3,052 organizations were quite revealing. The research showed that mixed formats are the most common instruments used with the management by objectives approach the most widely used. The surveys also found that the behavioural anchored rating scales, forced choice scales, or mixed standard scales are very uncommon. The choice of which technique to use is contingent on the purpose of the appraisal, i.e., whether it is summative or formative. The mixed formats are common, reflecting the multiple purpose that appraisals serve in many organizations (p. 331).

Conferencing

The concept of conferencing has developed over the past ten years. The two types of conferencing are pre- and post-conferencing. Ondrack & Oliver (1986) provide the following key elements to ensure pre- and post-conferences used in teacher evaluation are less stressful. They include:

- (1) both the supervisor and teacher have a clear and compatible understanding of why the evaluation has been conducted (purpose or appraisal);
- (2) the teacher knows what is expected of him/her (criteria and standards);
- (3) the teacher expects that the process will be supportive;
- (4) the teacher knows in advance how the evaluator has assessed performance; and
- (5) the teacher has full knowledge of where the information has come from and how it will be used (p. 107).

Sweeny (1983) suggests that while conferences are acknowledged as a key contributing factor to successful appraisal, little research has been conducted to guide practioners through the process (p. 135).

Appraisal Interviews

The interview process is a complex and often the most stressful of all components of the performance appraisal process. Interviewing requires skills such as listening and encouraging the interviewee to talk, using appropriate questions, and paraphrasing and summarizing (Hewton, 1988).

In listening and encouraging the interviewee to talk it is important to pay attention to not just what is said but how it is said. Particular attention must be paid to what is meant by the words and body language exhibited.

Hewton (1988) states:

Watching an interviewee's face, body posture and movements; and attention to verbal cues such as rapid speech, hesitancy, stammer, repetition, sharp breath, tone of voice, overly long silence and so on may be of equal importance as the actual words used by interviewees when forming judgements about their actual meaning (p. 42)

Questioning is also an important concept in the appraisal interview. A number of question types exist which may affect the responses given. Types include closed questions, probing questions, open questions, reflective questions, leading questions, and multiple questions.

The closed question is used when the interviewer is seeking a specific answer; further elaboration is not requested. The probing question is utilized to gain greater insight into the issue being discussed. Open questions seek to gain a greater understanding of the information provided. They provide room to answer in the interviewee's own fashion. Reflective questions provide an opportunity for the interviewer to reflect on information for further

clarification by the interviewee. Leading questions place the interviewees in a difficult position as they challenge them to answer the specific question or challenge the question. Multiple questions, as a final form of questioning, often confuse the interviewee as there is often a great deal of information to which to respond (Hewton, 1988).

Appraisal Training

In-service training is quickly becoming a major determinant of successful appraisal. Formal training programs in teacher evaluation, according to Ondrack & Oliver (1983), may:

- (1) increase both the appraiser's and teacher's confidence or faith in the appraisal process;
- (2) clarify the purposes of appraisal;
- (3) provide a vehicle for disseminating information on appropriate appraisal methods;
- (4) reveal unintentional rater biases;
- (5) promote consistency and a common frame of reference for the conduct of appraisal; and
- (6) encourage involvement and participation among levels within the organization (p. 18)

Assessment Period and Timing

Ondrack & Oliver (1986) refer to a fifth and final dimension of the appraisal process which pertains to the frequency, schedule, and continuity of the performance appraisal process (p. 57).

Although there is no conclusive research on the optimal number of times per year that assessment should occur, it would appear that the more often data is collected, the more accurate the information. According to Ondrack & Oliver (1986) there are four approaches which organizations can utilize.

The first approach regards the timing of the appraisal process. The scheduling of the appraisal of all employees at a fixed interval is one means of designating a specific time frame. A second approach includes completing the appraisal every year on the anniversary on the individual's contract start date. The third approach is to schedule the evaluation at the completion of a specific set of measurable performance tasks. A fourth approach is to evaluate at the end of a probationary period.

The literature commonly reveals that some appraisers adhere to a systematic schedule of observation, conferences, and summative assessments. Others only evaluate when a critical problem surfaces. Each approach is influenced by the purpose of evaluation, whether it is formative or summative.

Norman & Zawacki (1991) consider performance appraisal to be a continuous process because information about employee performance should be continuously monitored and feedback should occur often and on an informal basis. The day-to-day support of the employee should be a natural outgrowth of the formative appraisal system. Evaluations, on the other hand, may be a more periodic event as required by the summative needs of the system.

Outcomes of Appraisal

A recent phenomenon regarding appraisal is the desire to evaluate the evaluation system itself. At the present time, the literature is not conclusive as to the instruments to measure effectiveness. Impressions of effectiveness of appraisal systems tend to be inferred through informal feedback (Scriven, 1981). In the literature, outcome issues are addressed within a more conceptual framework that relates to one or more of the following criteria of appraisal effectiveness.

- (1) acceptability, or the extent to which appraisal participants and outside constituents exhibit trust in, rather than resistance to, the process;

- (2) validity, or the extent to which the appraisal system actually measures what it purports to measure with minimal bias or error;
- (3) satisfaction, or the extent to which the system meets the needs of individuals and promotes a positive, meaningful working climate; and
- (4) accountability, or the extent to which the appraisal system clarified individual and organizational roles and ensures prescribed responsibility for improvement in the quality of education (Ondrack & Oliver, 1986, p. 15).

The concept of evaluating the evaluation system itself will provide a foundation for future changes to the evaluation system and the development of a more consumer oriented process. The evolution of any appraisal system is a matter of program extension as a result of an assessment of outputs and consequences of the program.

Application to Residence Environment

The application of the performance appraisal concepts outlined through this literature review provide the necessary information for suggestions with respect to applying concepts to the performance appraisal of resident assistants.

Warner (1986) makes a number of suggestions which apply to the implementation of the system. The first is to create a system that is unique to the institution. Second, he maintains that staff should be consulted in both the development and implementation of the performance appraisal system. Sims & Foxley (1980) suggest that involving staff members in the development and implementation of these techniques can increase commitment to and an understanding of the overall objectives of the office as well as communication and cooperation among colleagues. In the case of evaluation of resident assistants, it would appear that the staff consulted should include proctors, housing management personnel, house residents and senior resident assistants.

A third suggestion is that once the system is established, information should be gathered from one up and one down the organizational hierarchy. In this case, that would include the proctor of each residence and the individual residents of each floor. A fourth suggestion is to foster communication regarding the performance appraisal process to lessen the anxiety regarding the process and improve communication. The fifth recommendation is to conduct informal evaluation sessions.

In conclusion, personnel evaluation as applied to resident assistants in university housing according to the literature reviewed, should be a process that involves continuous and effective interaction between professionals and

paraprofessionals. Meaningful evaluation will provide the means for improved student development. A systematic and humanistic system of performance appraisal for resident assistants would more likely ensure that there are opportunities for social, emotional, spiritual, and academic growth of the residents. As Warner (1986) challenges, the inclusion of a performance appraisal system is an essential element for effective residence hall management and development.

Student Development

Chickering (1981) asserts that the idea of human development can supply a unifying purpose for higher education. He argued that student (human) development is the principal aim of higher education and that its accomplishment is the overarching obligation of all college and university educators. In essence, the concept of student development arose from a need to assist students to develop fully as worthwhile members of a community. It involved the attempt to assist students to develop to be all that they could become. It was believed during the early 1940's and 1950's that students would gain this developmental attitude through participation in the university community.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's this concept grew into something of a movement. Miller (1990) indicates that the student development model grew out of years of social turmoil associated with the civil rights movement and opposition to the Vietnam conflict in the United States. Another major factor in the emergence of the concept of student development was the 1961 decision in the United States that universities were not to act *in loco parentia*, or in place of a student's parents while the student attended an institution of higher education (Winston & Anchors, 1994).

In a radical report challenging the underpinnings of the Student Affairs profession in the United States entitled Tomorrow's Higher Education (T.H.E.) Project (1972), student development was defined as the application of human development concepts in post secondary settings so that everyone involved can master increasingly complex developmental tasks, achieve self direction and become interdependent (Miller, 1984). Winston & Anchors (1993) indicate that the residence programs committed to student development goals should first and foremost assist students in the pursuit of becoming literate, liberally educated persons. Student affairs professionals and paraprofessionals are expected to address this objective through helping students overcome academic skill deficits.

A second objective indicated by Winston & Anchors (1993) centres around the promotion of students as responsible, contributing members of society composed of many dynamics. This goal of "civic education" was aptly stated by the late president of Rutgers University:

Making service to others a requirement for graduation can help students serve usefully as citizens or a democracy, but also may help combat racism, homophobia, religious intolerance, and fear and animosity towards foreigners providing an alternative to the naked pursuit of individual interest and material gain (Morse, 1989, 40-41).

A third objective of housing departments committed to student development is to advocate commitment to ideals of altruism and social justice. Winston & Anchors (1993) contend that staff activity and programming efforts should reflect these values.

A fourth objective is to support the development of a healthy lifestyle, both physically and psychologically. Thus, components of residence programs provide opportunities for residents to take the responsibility for their health and personal development. Paraprofessionals in the residence environment play an important role in modelling and supporting these initiatives.

To encourage students to examine their religious and spiritual life within the context of faith evaluation or academics is a fifth objective of student development initiatives. This student development initiative is provided to a great degree by the freedom to express religious culture and beliefs. The resident assistant's openness and willingness to ensure an atmosphere conducive to those beliefs is a major component of an effective job description of the resident assistant.

A sixth and final objective is the challenging of students to confront moral and ethical issues. The resident assistants often act as mentors and role models to other students residing in the respective residence. Resident assistants are often observed in their day-to-day interactions with residents.

In the assessment of performance appraisal processes it is imperative to take into account student development objectives and their implication for the development of performance appraisal policies and procedures.

Conclusion

A review of the literature focuses on the issues surrounding performance appraisal in general and more specifically on the performance appraisal of paraprofessionals in a university housing setting. The concept of student development is also reviewed.

The lack of research on performance appraisal of resident assistants requires the application of a number of performance appraisal concepts of educational personnel in other settings. As well, a review of related research on the performance appraisal of paraprofessionals in general provides a focus on the components and criteria necessary for performance appraisal. A review of the purpose, methods and data for measurement, process of appraisal, choice of appraiser, appraisal instruments, interviews, training, assessment period and timing provides an overview of concepts of performance appraisal that are similar for both paraprofessional and professional support staff in other fields of education.

The commitment of university housing departments to the concept of student development provides another necessary dimension for an analysis of the performance appraisal process for paraprofessionals.

CHAPTER III

Design of the Study

This project was carried out within the Department of Student Housing and Food Services, Office of Student Affairs and Services, Memorial University of Newfoundland. The paraprofessionals employed as resident assistants within the department were required to participate in a recently modified performance appraisal process. This process has been in existence since September, 1993 and has not been previously evaluated. It is anticipated that the results of this project will significantly affect the future development of the performance appraisal process for the student housing department and the extended university community.

The present process for performance appraisal is offered to 32 resident assistants from all (nine) houses within the Paton College housing complex. Two of these houses are comprised exclusively of male residents, three are co-educational, and four are exclusively female.

Data Collection

Data for this project were collected using two approaches: document analysis and key informant interviews. Guba & Lincoln (1981) define document analysis as a review of any written material that was not prepared

specifically in response to some request from the investigator. A form of document analysis is known as content analysis. Guba & Lincoln (1981) define content analysis as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages. This definition includes the critical elements of objectivity, systemization, and theoretical framework for the analysis of any document or documents. For purposes of this project documents reviewed will include the performance appraisal instrument for resident assistants at Memorial University of Newfoundland, guidelines from the Proctor's manual for use of the performance appraisal instrument, and other related documents deemed important throughout the research conducted.

Fetterman (1989) states that key informant interviews can take many forms, ranging from highly structured encounters to informal and conversational exchanges. Ideally, the researcher begins with informal interviews to learn the appropriate questions to ask, then as information is obtained the questions become more refined, focused and structured.

Fetterman (1989) states,

if the structured questions are rooted in an understanding of the immediate social situation, then the structured interview is

probably one of the most effective and efficient means of taking the pulse of a social context, including a college campus (p. 2).

Borg & Gall (1989) define key informants as members of a group under study who have special knowledge or perceptions that are not otherwise available to the researcher. Goetz & LeCompte (1980) further suggest that because key informants tend to be reflective individuals, they may provide insights into processes, sensitize the researcher to value dilemmas, and help the researcher see the implications of specific findings.

For purposes of this research interviews were conducted with the Director of the Department of Student Housing and the present Manager of Residence Life. Permission was sought to audio-tape each individual interview. Tapes were transcribed with permission from the interviewees.

Procedure

The researcher obtained specific data from the Department of Student Housing and Food Services, Memorial University of Newfoundland, in relation to the present instruments and processes used to appraise the performance of paraprofessional resident assistants. Data was obtained primarily from the Office of Residence Life, Student Housing and Food Services. It is this office that is responsible for the supervision of all resident

assistants and the development of the new process of performance appraisal initiated. Data obtained included the following:

- resident assistant evaluation form;
- excerpt from proctors manual concerning evaluation;
- resident assistant position description; and
- resident assistant employment contract.

Key informant interviews were conducted with the Director of Student Housing and the Manager of Residence Life. Data from these interviews was analyzed to determine the institutional objectives for the program and to provide supplementary information on the development of the performance appraisal instrument and subsequent process.

Data Analysis

A systems model for performance appraisal similar to that provided by Lawton, Hickcox, Leithwood & Musella (1986) and Ondrack & Oliver (1986) provided the framework for the analysis of data. The appraisal documents currently used were examined to determine the extent to which the various dimensions, as outlined in the statement of purpose, are addressed. The systems model provides a systematic process for the collection of materials and ideas regarding performance appraisal systems. Also, interviews with key

informants were used to confirm or deny the applications of such dimensions in the implementation of the evaluation model.

The first component in the systems model describes organizational goals and objectives. These goals and objectives provide guidance to individual departments so that overall goals may be achieved. This study reviewed the organization's goals and objectives to determine the extent to which the evaluative process actually reflects those goals and objectives.

The organizational structure provided the second component in the model. The organization's structure must be reviewed to provide a basis for understanding reporting mechanisms and the responsibility for performance appraisals. The utilization of job descriptions for positions within the department, the third component, are important for an analysis of performance appraisal processes. In the case of performance appraisals of paraprofessional resident assistants, the attached job descriptions will be reviewed as a means of assessing the clarity of roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.

Employment contracts and individual objectives provide a focus for the fourth and fifth components in the analysis of the performance appraisal process for resident assistants. The contract may provide restraints or create opportunities which should be assessed throughout the review of the performance appraisal process. The degree to which the organization achieves

it's goals is determined by the degree to which the individual fulfils his/her employment contract and job description.

A sixth component is an analysis of the performance appraisal itself. If individuals had all the same abilities, new demands were never placed on staff, and if the selection of employees was always accurate then there would be no need for performance appraisals. This, however, is not reality, and thus a performance appraisal process is a necessary component of any organization's management structure.

Purpose of appraisal, the seventh component, determined the criteria to be used in appraisal. Criteria is refined by job descriptions and contracts.

Criteria, the eighth component, affects the sources, types, and methods of data collection. Data Collection, the ninth component of our systems model, concerns an individual's performance. This component then culminates in the actual performance appraisal (component 10) utilizing a set of standards to compare expected individual performance with actual performance. This analysis results in decisions that are shared with the evaluatee and used for developmental or improvement purposes (component 11).

The framework can be reduced to three broader stages. Figure 1 provides some broader classifications of the stages highlighted above. These

classifications include: preparation for appraisal, data collection, and reporting and follow up.

Preparation includes following four major aspects: planning, purposes, criteria, and standards. Planning includes such aspects as notification of those being evaluated and the holding of pre-conferences. Purpose includes the intended outcomes, while criteria refers to indicators that measure some quality or behaviour. Standards refers to the level of expectations regarding criteria.

A second stage of the research is data collection. Includes the sources and types of information collected, who collects the information, and the time spent in collecting it.

Reporting and follow-up, Stage 3, includes the nature of the performance appraisal report, it's destination, with whom it is shared, and any follow up activities developed. The evolution of policy, Stage 4, refers to the process by which the policy was developed has been examined. The activities undertaken to implement policy, reviews of the policy, and the specific information found within the policy are also examined.

Impact of the policy, Stage 5, is also examined to ascertain the degree of compliance with the policy, the amount of effort expended in it's implementation and administration, and the nature and degree of impact. A

final component of the framework is effectiveness, generally known as the discussion of the effectiveness of evaluation systems. These five classifications will provide the framework for the analysis and discussion of data in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis and Discussion of Data

This chapter discusses the data gathered, provides an interpretation of the performance appraisal process in accordance with the objectives stated, and presents other related findings. A systems model for performance appraisal similar to that provided by Lawton, Hickcox, Leithwood & Musella (1986) and Ondrack and Oliver (1986) provides a framework for analysis of the performance appraisal process presently utilized for paraprofessionals in the Department of Student Housing and Food Services at Memorial.

Five categories provide the framework for the analysis and discussion of data. They include preparation for appraisal, data collection, reporting and follow up, evolution of policy, and impact of policy and practice. The category preparation for appraisal, includes the organizational goals and objectives, organizational structure, job descriptions, purposes of appraisal and criteria will be reviewed. The category, reporting of information and follow up, includes the subheadings performance review and assessment of the appraisal system.

Preparation for Appraisal

Organizational Goals and Objectives

The Department of Student Housing and Food Services has developed a mission statement which epitomizes the objectives inherent in its operation.

The statement reads:

Within the context of Student Affairs and Services, the Department of Student Housing and Food Services provides a living environment which permits students to achieve their maximum personal development.

Residences operated by the University provide in addition, comfortable, safe accommodations and programs which enhance each individual's potential for educational, social and personal development. It is understood and accepted that each individual student has the responsibility to utilize the opportunities provided.

As part of this broad mission the department attempts to realize the following objectives:

- (1) To build a sense of community which promotes the interaction of peers of different backgrounds, values, goals, and lifestyles.
- (2) To provide individuals and groups with educational and developmental opportunities in their living community.
- (3) To provide students with direct access to assistance, guidance and support, as needed.
- (4) To encourage and provide support services to student governmental bodies.
- (5) To ensure that individual freedoms are enjoyed.
- (6) To provide a clean and secure environment.
- (7) To develop and enforce rules and regulations for the good of the residence community.
- (8) To ensure equitable treatment.

Organizational Structure

The Department of Student Housing and Food Services is a department of Student Affairs and Services, Memorial University of Newfoundland. The Office of Student Affairs and Services is concerned with all facets of student life. According to the Memorial University calendar (1994-1995), it exists to

provide assistance to students in personal and social issues, and in particular with problems associated with life at university. The Dean of Student Affairs is the Chief Student Affairs Officer at Memorial University. The Director of Student Housing and Food Services reports directly to the Dean of Student Affairs and Services.

The Director is responsible for the operation of all living accommodations on the St. John's campus, the residence life office and the administration of resident assistant's report. This office is supervised by a Manager of Residence Life. The manager, in turn, is responsible for the recruitment, selection, administration, and performance appraisal of all personnel within this office. These personnel include the residence nurse, 12 proctors, 32 resident assistants, and nine academic dons. Reporting authority is designed so that the proctors report directly to the Manager of Residence Life, the senior resident assistant reports to the proctor and the resident assistants report to the senior resident assistant. Resident assistants are assigned responsibility for a specific floor (living arrangement).

The development of a revised policy for the performance appraisal of resident assistants occurred as a result of a review of the old system. It was agreed by key informants interviewed that the old system was developed for a different point in time when there was a different definition of what a resident

assistant was and what a resident assistant did in that position. It was decided that with the development of a new job description for resident assistants and with other changes occurring that the time was right for a review of the duties, responsibilities, goals, objectives, and policy for performance appraisal.

Initially, an informal committee was established by the Manager of Residence Life to review numerous aspects of the residence assistants program. Many aspects of the program were reviewed during this process such as wage rates and benefits and the performance evaluation instrument and process.

Once the informal committee had presented its recommendations, the policy was reviewed by the Manager of Residence Life and then discussed with the Director. The recommendations were subsequently approved by the Director.

Implementation of the policy occurred through a presentation to each of the houses and to each of the resident assistants. In anticipation of some resistance to change, it was agreed that a pilot term be employed to initially test the new policy. An all-male house, an all-female house and a coeducational house were chosen. Initially, these houses were chosen to reflect the demographics inherent in the Paton College system and also because there were individuals in the houses who felt most comfortable with the

changes. The pilot occurred during Fall semester, 1993. Throughout the implementation of the policy a number of other houses were included during the Winter Semester. During the following Fall, implementation of the new policy had occurred in all residences in Paton College.

Job Descriptions

Planning for evaluation begins the moment the resident assistant signs his/her initial contract of employment. Through the use of this contract and accompanying duties, resident assistants are made aware of their responsibilities and the importance of cooperation in the performance appraisal process (see Appendix A). A very specific reference is made to the relationship between the position description and the evaluation process. As reference is made to the position description and hence the university's expectations and the performance appraisal process, clarity is maintained as to the potential items on which individuals will be evaluated. Further preparation occurs in the form of a letter from the Manager of Residence Life to the proctors. This occurs in the fourth week of the semester. This letter is accompanied by the performance appraisal instrument (see Appendix B). The time frame for the evaluation is specified in the proctor's manual. The time period, or semester schedule, for evaluations to be conducted is to be made

known to all resident assistants. This is completed to ensure that there is no confusion regarding the evaluation procedure. The manual referred to is designed not as a policy manual but rather a guide for administration purposes. The time frame for the entire process is arbitrary depending on the length of time it takes for residents to complete the evaluations and return them to the proctor. It is important to note that only those residents residing on the specific floor of a resident assistant will complete an evaluation of that resident assistant's performance. Residents do have the opportunity to comment briefly on the leadership of other resident assistants.

As noted, resident assistants are aware of the time frame, job responsibilities and their relationship to the evaluation, and when to expect feedback regarding their performance. Pre-conferencing does not occur in a formalized sense with a one-on-one discussion with the proctor, although the initial resident assistant meeting at the beginning of the academic year does establish the position responsibilities. A written copy of the job responsibilities is also provided to the resident as a component of the resident assistant's manual distributed at the beginning of each semester. This document specifically references the fact that the responsibilities outlined will provide a benchmark for evaluation.

Notification, pre-conference, and planning for evaluation are important elements without exception, in the research conducted to date. The data collected for this study indicates that some preparation may be conducted; however, it is informal and no formalized pre-conferencing is conducted.

Interviews with key informants indicate that they consider planning to be a critical factor in the performance appraisal process. Key informants stated that the establishment of clear objectives is critical to the appraisal process. Planning is also considered an opportunity to solicit feedback from resident assistants regarding the appraisal process.

Purposes of Appraisal

The data reviewed indicated two specific purposes for the performance evaluation of residence assistants. Specifically, these comprise individual and organizational objectives.

Interviews with key informants indicate that the purpose of appraisal is to assist the organization in providing enhanced service to the resident students and to empower the personal, professional and academic development in the resident assistants evaluated. One comment by a key informant indicated that by redesigning the performance appraisal system they were meeting their staffing objectives by attracting better people which allowed the organization to

redefine the role as one more concerned with programming and student development, and less with discipline.

Individual objectives are also being realized through the development of this process. As one key informant explained;

I think what we are doing in implementing our new performance appraisal program is that we are starting to hit on the key points of our mission statement. As an example, this year our resident assistants have gotten a higher academic average than Paton College, in general, and higher than senior students, in general.

The training program for resident assistants is also being redesigned as a result of increased focus on the skills and abilities of resident assistants.

Criteria

The criteria selected as expectations for performance of staff tend to use specific process-oriented criteria. Criteria include accessibility of resident assistants, punctuality, consistency in enforcing housing rules and regulations, involvement of the resident assistants in house activities, approachability, and effectiveness. These indicators, or criteria, by which performance is measured

are specified in the documentation obtained entitled, Resident Assistant Evaluation Form (see Appendix C).

The criteria outlined above are used in establishing benchmarks for developing the performance appraisal instrument. A rating scale instrument is used to measure performance of resident assistants. The criteria stated are also noted in the resident assistant's manual excerpts (see Appendix E). In this case the setting of specific criteria is developed by the housing department in conjunction with a committee comprised of residents, resident assistants, senior resident assistants, proctors, and housing officials.

Standards within this process are used as a benchmark for assessing a resident assistant's performance. In the written procedures reviewed there was no reference to explicit standards. However, the resident assistant evaluation form (Appendix B) has a scale upon which to rate specific criteria.

Data Collection

This section is an analysis of the data collection process for the performance appraisal of resident assistants. A number of specific areas will be reviewed, including the type of information collected, who collects the information, the time spent on collecting it, and the reporting of information.

The written procedures obtained indicate that information is elicited from residents of the particular floor of the resident assistant being evaluated. Information is also solicited from the proctor of the house who is directly responsible for the paraprofessional's performance.

Observation by peers is the most common form of collecting information about the resident assistant. This type of peer review provides the opportunity for those individuals who live with the resident assistants to focus on the resident assistant's ability to perform the job adequately. This process may also provide an opportunity for the residents to negatively influence the evaluation for reasons other than poor performance of job responsibilities by the resident assistant. The concerns of residents are not always the same as those of the housing administration to whom the resident assistant is responsible.

Self-evaluation is not utilized at all in this process. In keeping with the concept of personal development this process would provide information for a competing source rather than solely through the views of the residents and the proctor. It is stated in the written material (Appendix C) that other sources of information such as number of fines levied, number of warnings issued, attendance at resident assistant training sessions, etc. is utilized for purposes of the appraisal.

The present process of performance appraisal solicits information from all residents of the particular floor. This information is then collated and reported by the proctor through personal feedback to the resident assistant. A period of three weeks is given for any suggestions by the proctor to be incorporated into the performance of the resident assistant. The proctor then meets with the resident assistant and provides an anecdotal report to the Manager of Residence Life. The information collected will include, but is not limited to, specific strengths and weaknesses in the following categories: leadership skills, house involvement, crisis intervention skills, interpersonal skills, flexibility/availability, administrative effectiveness, and other (see Appendix C).

An opportunity for formal input from the housing office is provided. Statements made in discussions with key informants indicated that the proctor is the key evaluator. The proctor may elicit information from many sources and then provide a summary of strengths and weaknesses to the housing office. Here, any strengths and weaknesses may be acted upon in providing needed recognition and opportunities for training.

Resident assistants are evaluated once during each semester. The evaluation process begins after the fourth week of each semester. A letter to individual proctors and a number of appraisal instruments are distributed at

this time. Once the anonymous evaluations are completed by the residents on each floor for their respective resident assistant, they are forwarded to the proctor who, in turn, passes the evaluations on to the resident assistant and one week later discusses the results with the resident assistant. Approximately one week later these evaluations are passed back to the proctor who reviews the evaluations and provides feedback, regarding strengths and weaknesses, to the resident assistant. A time frame for the evaluation process is provided to the resident assistant at the beginning of each semester.

Time for data collection during the evaluation process occurs in the day-to-day routine of residence life. Time is set aside at the beginning of the year to explain the process and time is made available for post-conferencing or formal meetings later in the semester as the appraisal process occurs. It is interesting to note that not a great deal of formal time is spent during the performance appraisal process but a great deal of energy is expended, informally, in collecting data.

Reporting of Information and Follow-Up

The procedures outlined in Appendix D provide the mechanism for reporting of information after the data for performance appraisal have been collected. Post-conferencing and summary writing is generally suggested.

The documents reviewed suggested that the proctor should meet with the resident assistant with a list of strengths and weaknesses regarding the resident assistant's performance. The proctor then writes a final assessment in an anecdotal format. This report would comment on leadership skills, house involvement, crisis intervention skills (it is not specified if these refer to physical or mental health issues), interpersonal skills, flexibility/availability, administrative effectiveness, and other components. The reports are then submitted to the Manager of Residence Life. Concerns arising from these anecdotal reports will be addressed at this time.

It is not stated, what if anything, occurs if improvement is required. What process would take place with respect to further employment or requirement to attend further training in the area lacking. If improvement is the basis for appraisal it would be expected that this would indeed be a key factor in the reporting process.

Key informants expressed a common view that reports should be kept confidential. Only the proctor, the resident assistant evaluated and the Manager of Residence Life should be privy to the information contained in the evaluation. The Director and Assistant Director are consulted regarding the overall assessment of the semester and any staffing implications inherent in the performance appraisals conducted by the Manager of Residence Life.

One key informant expressed strong views that the information must be confidential and that the resident assistant must be privy to the results of the evaluation process. The responsibility to share the information with representatives of the housing office is critical if further development of the individual and the residence is to occur.

Follow up with the resident assistant is critical if a clear understanding of the individual's strengths and weaknesses is going to occur. The time frame for this to occur should be as quickly as possible after the evaluation process is concluded. It usually occurs one week before exams. This time frame appears to be flexible.

Performance Review

If an individual resident assistant is experiencing personal or paraprofessional difficulties, the Department of Housing and Food Services has coordinated the availability of a member of the University Counselling Centre to assist the individual as necessitated. This is but one method of support with the Manager of Residence Life and proctor providing support as well.

Improvement on work responsibilities is usually left to be dealt with between the proctor and the resident assistant. Usually a change occurs in the three week period prior to the final anecdotal report being submitted to the

housing office. One key informant expressed the opinion that the housing office could be doing more in the way of individual development. This is presently under review with the Counselling Centre.

Since the implementation of the new performance appraisal process the majority of resident assistants have complied. According to key informants there are still a few resident assistants who have some philosophical objections to changes that occurred with respect to duties. It would appear that as a result of the establishment of an informal committee composed of various members of the residence life community, the redefining the performance appraisal policy met little objection.

In interviews with key informants it was expressed that it was hard to place a set figure on the number of hours engaged in evaluating the performance appraisal of resident assistants. It was stated that the performance appraisal is an ongoing aspect of administration that comes up in daily discussions between the proctor and the housing office. It was estimated that the Manager of Residence Life may spend one hour a day while the Director may spend approximately 10 hours a semester.

It is anticipated that less time will be spent by the Manager of Residence Life as the new policy becomes inherent in the administration of the individual residences. It was stated by the manager of residence life that,

"once you have established the program in the house and certain expectations for your leaders, precedent has been set. You don't need to spend time reviewing the process." The role of the Director is seen, by the Director, as more of a follow up and empowering approach to those who actually administer the policy.

Assessment of Appraisal System

As stated by key informants the impact of the policy is seen to be positive. Through implementation of the policy they have identified weaknesses in the system; they have addressed these concerns and throughout policy implementation are beginning to witness a greater emphasis on student development and professionalism in the residence system. More work can be facilitated on the real impact and the statistical impact of training of resident assistants.

Another comment with respect to impact relates to the development of Paton College as a more academic centered unit with resident assistants as role models.

A review of the policy is occurring throughout the policy implementation stage. A number of suggestions with respect to staffing have occurred as a result of the performance appraisal policy.

One example provided by a key informant is that there is some concern that there are certain individuals who are not meeting the performance criteria established but nevertheless may be the best persons for the job in the individual house. A suggestion which will be reviewed, is to hire the best thirty people and place them in various houses throughout Paton College, not necessarily the house in which they presently live. It is becoming a process of continuous evaluation. Through the establishment of the performance appraisal policy, administration can see the problems that are in place and begin to correct them.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter is a summary of the major findings relevant to the program under investigation, an interpretation of results, reports the conclusions reached in the study, and offers recommendations for action and future review.

Summary

With the continued quest for financial accountability and total quality management within post secondary institutions, the need for effective performance appraisals is attaining notoriety. An area of specific concern is within the residence environment of housing departments. Within these departments a multitude of paraprofessional staff carry out a number of tasks inherent for the smooth operation of housing departments. While the present system of performance appraisal for resident assistants has focused primarily on the specific administrative requirements for performance appraisal, these requirements do not necessarily advocate the integration of student development concepts.

The literature reviewed for performance appraisal of resident assistants continually refers to the major components of any performance appraisal

process for professional staff as compared to that of paraprofessional staff. The literature referenced specifically to resident assistants does refer to the integration of student development components in the development of job descriptions, criteria based performance appraisal instruments and pre- and post-conferencing (Winston & Anchors, 1994).

The performance appraisal process for resident assistants under review was developed by the Department of Student Housing and Food Services, Memorial University of Newfoundland. The purpose for the development of this instrument was to effectively evaluate the performance of resident assistants. It was anticipated that the use of this process would provide a more effective method of feedback to the housing administrators and supervisors regarding the performance of resident assistants. The present system of performance appraisal evaluates 23 students employed as resident assistants, and nine senior resident assistants. During the course of this project, information was gathered from the residence life office of the Student Housing Department and interviews with key informants. Information included a resident assistant position description, resident assistant evaluation form, the evaluation section of the proctor's manual, and resident assistant employment contract. From an analysis of this data, information was provided about the program, its process, and the criteria utilized.

Interpretation of Results

What Criteria is Utilized

There is often a great deal of ambiguity in job descriptions provided for resident assistants. The specific job description provided for resident assistants at Memorial University is quite the opposite. This job description has operationalized the department's requirements. A number of issues need to be further operationalized but this is more a refinement process rather than a problem. Given that much of what resident assistants do cannot be directly observed by supervisors, it is imperative to ensure clarity in performance criteria which Appendix B proposes. The provision of a clear statement of job functions and expectations is in keeping with recent literature.

Literature reviewed suggested that evaluations should not only be based on an operationalization of the department's job description for resident assistants but also specific goals for the living unit developed jointly by the resident assistant and the supervisor, and specific personal growth goals developed by the resident assistant and communicated to the supervisor. Both of these suggestions are not presently being administered within the housing department. Each goal is necessary if the principles of student development are to be included within the performance appraisal process.

Does the Evaluation Model Outline Clear Procedures for the Evaluation of Resident Assistants?

Sources of data used in the performance appraisal of resident assistants at Memorial include supervisor observations and written resident evaluations distributed and collected by neutral third parties. Throughout this project it was found that the supervisor or proctor in this case did provide information on the resident assistant's performance. The proctor maintained the lead role in the entire process from distributing evaluation instruments to post-conferencing with the individual resident assistant. A second source of data is the confidential written evaluations distributed and collected by neutral third parties. In this project it was found that there was opportunity for resident input. The evaluations were distributed by the proctors. Although expected to be neutral within the individual houses, proctors are still seen as employed by the university and have to enforce housing rules and regulations. Hence they cannot act as a neutral third party. Winston & Anchors (1993) suggest a neutral third party could be an elected house representative. This would provide a cooperative element between house committees, executives and the resident assistants entrusted with house administration. A third component suggested is the observations of fellow resident assistants. It was found that this source of data was not formally utilized in any of the procedures

reviewed. It is suggested that other resident assistants who understand the position of resident assistant be provided an opportunity to give input into the performance appraisal process. A fourth source of data is the resident assistant's own reports. This source is presently used in soliciting information for the performance appraisal reports. Resident assistants are provided an opportunity to review the resident's review of their performance and are also provided an opportunity to respond to criticisms or accolades. It is important to recognize that the evaluations provided by house residents are often considered to be unreliable. They are almost without exception greatly affected by the frequency of disciplinary problems in a house and the personal relationship with the resident assistant. Upcraft & Pilato (1982) found that residents tend to give uniformly positive evaluations to resident assistants they like and uniformly negative ones to those resident assistants they dislike.

Outcomes Dimension

One specific aspect of the literature reviewed which is not specifically stated in the information analyzed for this study is the establishment of clear goals for the job and evaluation process. Goals for the job are not fully operationalized but remain constant for each resident assistant employed. The development and agreement of specific goals for the resident assistant on a

specific living unit is required. Each situation is different and the administration goals for one house may not be the same for another. One's resident assistant's personal goals are not another's. If a cooperative approach to performance evaluation is to occur there should be specific goals developed at the beginning of each semester. These goals should be mutually agreed upon during pre-conferencing between the proctor and the resident assistant and included in written form.

The establishment of clear goals for the evaluation process is also important. All parties must understand why the evaluation is taking place. Clear information should be provided not only regarding the time frame for the evaluation but also regarding the purpose of the evaluation process.

A review of the data gathered indicated that a post-conference between the proctor and the resident assistant evaluated is required. It is here that the resident assistants are given the opportunity to challenge evaluations with which they disagree. No indication has been forthcoming that this meeting is an opportunity to establish new goals for the living unit or the resident assistant.

Performance appraisal of resident assistants at Memorial University are evaluated based on stated criteria from previously identified sources. The only

concern uncovered is that an opportunity is provided on the performance appraisal instrument for "other" comments. This opportunity may require respondents to stray from the previously stated criteria and hence provide comments on criteria not previously developed.

Conclusions

The present performance appraisal process for resident assistants at Memorial University of Newfoundland is effective. The evaluation system was developed to provide information to the housing department to make administrative decisions. It was also designed to provide residents an opportunity to give feedback on resident assistants assigned to their living unit. This study has been a formative evaluation of the performance appraisal process to determine its effectiveness on an interim basis and provide information for future modification.

The results of the evaluation through data gathering and analysis of the Fall 1993 and Winter 1994 process of performance appraisal of resident assistants has proven the policy an effective process. A review of recent literature provides a framework for effective performance appraisal processes. The process studied does in fact meet these requirements. In keeping with the literature reviewed the present process meets all the stated objectives for an

effective performance appraisal process of resident assistants. On a long term basis it is difficult to determine the further refinement of the process, but it is anticipated that the program will continue to be worthwhile and provide the necessary feedback for administrative decisions and student development.

Recommendations

These recommendations are elicited from an analysis of the data collected in this study. It is recommended:

- (1) that the job description be further operationalized to clarify present criteria used for the performance evaluation of resident assistants;
- (2) that pre-conferencing be included as a formal component of the evaluation process;
- (3) that personal goals be integrated into criteria to be evaluated between proctor and resident assistants;
- (4) specific living unit goals be integrated into criteria to be evaluated;
- (5) student development concepts (i.e.; social, emotional, spiritual) be integrated within the position description;

- (6) that resident assistant evaluations should be distributed to house residents by a neutral third party, not the proctor;
- (7) that clear goals for the job of each resident be established and appended to other more general goals;
- (8) that personal goals be established between the proctor and resident assistants in pre-conference interviews;
- (9) that there be further refinement of the goals for the evaluation process; and
- (10) that the performance appraisal instrument include further operationalized questions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Resident Assistant Position

Description and Employment Contract

Resident Assistant Position Description

Under the direct supervision of the Proctors, the Resident Assistants (RA) are expected to demonstrate a commitment to Paton College by working to create a sense of community that contributes to individual growth

Duties

In addition to fulfilling the more general roles of the Resident Assistant as outlined in the attachment, RA's in Paton College are required to fulfil the following duties:

A. General

1. Resident Assistants are expected to:
 - (a) be reasonably available to students in addition to scheduled duty time;
 - (b) be aware of individual and group needs;
 - (c) create an environment conducive to learning;
 - (d) demonstrate academic competency by maintaining a minimum 60% average and by passing at least three courses each semester.

B. Administrative

1. Assist proctors with "check in" of students.
2. Prepare room condition reports at the beginning and end of each semester, and at other times.
3. Prepare weekly wing condition reports.
4. Pick up and deliver mail, as scheduled.
5. Convene wing/floor meetings, as necessary.
6. Use good judgement when issuing notes for sick trays.
7. Fulfil other administrative duties, as required.

C. Assisting Students

1. Counsel students as expertise permits. Be prepared to refer to the appropriate resource when a situation demands skills beyond those of the Resident Assistant.
2. Be particularly alert to the needs of new students.
3. Mediate roommate and floor problems with the students involved.
4. Document and follow up on problems.

D. Discipline

1. Know and observe university and residence rules and regulations.
2. Ensure that students are aware of these rules and regulations and what behaviour is expected of them.
3. Prevent abuses before they become major problems.
4. Respond appropriately when violations occur.
5. Be consistent and fair when disciplining students.

E. House Responsibilities

1. Attend house meetings, regularly.
2. Participate in house sponsored activities.
3. Encourage residents to participate in house activities.

F. On-Duty Requirements

1. Be available within the residence, as much as possible, during the daytime, but at all times after 7:00 p.m.
2. In the event of unavoidable absence from the house, make sure that the key ring is entrusted to another Resident Assistant and that students are informed of this by written notice.

3. Accompany students who are locked out of their rooms and open doors for them. Do not give the keys to students.
4. Pick up and deliver mail before 1:00 p.m., if possible.
5. Be particularly observant of all areas of the house and take appropriate action if problems arise.

G. Building Operations

1. Safety

- (a) Be in tune with health and safety conditions. Know who to contact in the event of any emergency;
- (b) Be aware of fire regulations, especially the RA's responsibility in the event of a fire or a fire drill;
- (c) Disseminate information to students regarding fire safety, personal safety, etc.;
- (d) Report any unsafe conditions, as appropriate;
- (e) Ensure that the House is secure.

2. Maintenance

- (a) Prepare damage reports and repair requisitions, as necessary;

- (b) Report damaged, missing or misplaced furnishings and attempt to identify the individual(s) responsible;
- (c) Report on-going maintenance problems that have not been corrected;
- (d) Ensure the safety and security of the key ring and report missing keys, immediately.

H. Programming

1. Support and assist in the implementation of programs and projects as directed by the Residence Life Office.
2. Suggest programs to meet student needs and interests.

I. Training

1. Attend the Fall Resident Assistant Orientation Session.
2. Attend Resident Assistant meetings, as required.
3. Attend on-going training sessions.

Evaluation

The performance of Resident Assistants, as a group and individually, will be evaluated regularly. RA's are expected to cooperate with the evaluation process. The extensive detail above as well as other available

information is intended to provide, as clear an indication as possible, as to the University's expectations.

Contract

Each Resident Assistant signs a contract for one semester. In addition to the aforementioned, a Resident Assistantship is contingent on the following requirements:

1. That the Resident Assistant be in residence three days before residence officially opens to participate in a Resident Assistant training programme.
2. That during your time as a Resident Assistant you maintain a 60% average and pass a minimum of three courses each semester.
3. That you not hold any other paying position. Students who have the opportunity to work within the university in academics such as marking papers and instructing labs may be permitted to do so by applying in writing and obtaining the written permission of the Director of Student Housing. The Director of Student Housing reserves the right to require a Resident Assistant to

relinquish any or all other positions held that are deemed to interfere with the Resident Assistant position.

4. That you not have any outstanding fees with MUN.
5. That the Resident Assistant remain in residence until 4:00 p.m. of the last day that residence is open.
6. That the Resident Assistant fulfil all other requirements of the Resident Assistant Employment Contract.

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the cancellation of the Resident Assistantship.

Some Expectations of Residents Assistants

Administrative Details

1. Assistant with First-year check-in and be able to explain staff duties and residence programmes to students, parents and guests.
2. Assist with the communication among staff members, students, and administration.
3. Keep the Proctor/Senior RA/Housing Office informed of what is happening seek-by-week on your wing through room/wing checks and reports.

4. Maintain a positive working relationship with Student Housing, maintenance and housekeeping staff.

Helping to Provide Control

1. Be a role model by knowing and adhering to rules and regulations of the University and Eaton College.
2. Support the University and residence regulations.
3. Encourage students to approach other students with violations.
4. Report behavioural infractions according to determined policies.
5. Assist students in knowing what is expected of them.

Helping to Establish a Healthy Residence Hall Environment

1. Encourage an atmosphere conducive to study.
2. Know and communicate well with the residents in their house/wing/floor.
3. Be tolerant of different lifestyles.
4. Help students develop a respect for each other's rights and freedoms.
5. Help students develop a respect for private and university property.
6. Support and provide creative suggestions for residence programming.
7. Encourage students to attend residence and university programmes.

Assisting Individual Student Needs

1. Be aware of the resources in the campus community that help students and be able to refer students to them.
2. Be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses.
3. Show concern for people and their problems.
4. Be aware of adjustment problems, especially for a new student.
5. Be available for casual contacts and develop a pattern of available times.
6. Have good interpersonal skills.
7. Be a good listener and counselling helper.
8. Follow up with students who have had problems to see the results and to learn if further assistance can be given.
9. Be aware of attitudes and behaviour patterns of the residents in their house.
10. Be aware of individual student goals, abilities and potential for achievement.

The Resident Assistant as a Role Model

No matter which house you are a Resident Assistant in, there are four basic roles that you will assume. The first and perhaps the most influential

role is that of the role-model. Remember, you are placed in the living environment within a residence as a staff person. The very fact that you hold this position says to every student that you possess certain characteristics that the University respects and considers important. To the first year student, you are looked to as a role model for them to emulate. This incidentally, is one of the primary arguments used for having undergraduate Resident Assistants in the residences. The advantage that undergraduate Resident Assistants may have is that their experience is not too far removed from the experience of an incoming first year student.

As a Resident Assistant, you model behavior that others will come to assume to be appropriate for student in university. If you demonstrate good study skills, there is an increased chance that new students on your wing will also begin to emulate this pattern of study. Likewise, if you spend most of your time throwing a frisbee up and down the hallway, drinking beer with a certain group of people in your living unit, or continually find your time is occupied by your boyfriend/girlfriend, you are setting an entirely different model of behaviour and communicating your values by your actions.

As a Resident Assistant you are expected, as part of the role-model responsibility, to live by the rules, regulations and policies the University has set. Unless you can abide by the, do not expect your residents to do so. And,

if you cannot abide by these policies you have no right being a Resident Assistant, you also make a commitment to the position as it is defined. If you disagree with the University's Policies and Regulations, discuss the matter with your Proctor and Residence Life Staff. If you still cannot live with them, resign. Do not do yourself, the University and your residents a disservice by not enforcing the rules or pretending that the policies and regulations do not exist.

It is often said that Residence Life Staff "live in a fish bowl," which means that whether you like it or not, the Resident Assistant position extends outside of your residence and on to the campus. This does not mean that you go about campus enforcing random rules and regulations, advising students on this and that, and generally asserting your staff position in places where it is not called for or welcomed. It does mean that your role-modelling responsibility carried beyond your house. You cannot always shed the cloak of Resident Assistant when you leave your residence.

Your role as a model for other students is one of the most important duties that you will assume. Handle the responsibility carefully and with the respect it deserves.

The Resident Assistant as a Counsellor

The second role that the Resident Assistant serves is a counsellor, consultant, or advisor. Perhaps the word counsellor is a misnomer since it is more a helping or advising role. Students undergo many adjustments, stress, and crises throughout the academic year. They are torn away from their families, the familiar surroundings of their homes and their established friends. They are asked to live among a group of peers whom they do not know and asked to produce more than they have ever had to before. AT the same time, students are undergoing tremendous psychological adjustments in the transitions to adulthood. It is within the residence that many of these growth experiences, emotional traumas, and crisis come to light. It is in the residence that the students values will be challenged by other students. Their knowledge of themselves and their ability to work with other people will be tested. For many students who are accustomed to a quiet, private environment, a group situation can be very threatening and difficult. It is the Resident Assistant who is expected to help students through this unique experience.

Think back, for a moment, on how many hundreds of challenges that were placed before you in your first year of university registration; meal cards, residence, even the multitude of buildings in which classes are held were all foreign and quite forbidding. As a Resident Assistant, you will be the

person students are likely to turn to for help. Providing information and 'advice' are very important functions of the position and are among the primary reasons for its existence.

To do this in a 'counselling' framework, you will be asked to establish a positive, friendly rapport with every person on your wing, not just the select few who instantly warm to you. You must be accessible to every one. The advice you provide must be objective, consistent and reflect a good knowledge of the campus and its services. Perhaps even more important is the Resident Assistant's ability to refer students to the right source when the questions asked are out of their realm. When students come to you with a problem they must be able to trust you to hold everything in confidence. Only then will students approach you, as a Resident Assistant, with their concerns.

The advising/helping role can be taken one step further. It is the Resident Assistant who has the best opportunity to help students who are experiencing minor problems and to identify students who are experiencing major problems. Identification of students who are undergoing some form of personal crisis or severe depression and helping them via the referral process can assist them to become better adjusted to the difficulties that university life imposes.

The Resident Assistant as a Teacher

The third role the resident assistant assumes is that of a teacher. At an informal level, the Resident Assistants teach specifically:

- (a) general information about the university, campus, events, and the services offered;
- (b) group-process skills; in house/wing/floor meetings, in groups planning an activity, during student activities within the residence and during the intramural activities in which one may become involved - all through modelling behaviour.
- (c) the Resident Assistant teaches values both through their own personal behaviour and through frequent discussions with students.

The Resident Assistant as a Student

The fourth and most important role of the Resident Assistant is that of the student. Obviously, academic success is a primary goal while at university and is vital that you ensure you are able to devote the necessary time to your studies. Although many Resident Assistants find that additional responsibility makes them budget time better, others in an effort to do a good job, spend an unreasonable amount of time responding to students problems. You must learn

to establish a satisfactory balance between your studies, your personal time and your job.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the job of Resident Assistant can present you with many challenges and many responsibilities since you are working with and are accountable for many other people. However, through this job and through the training you will receive you have an opportunity that most other students do not: learn a lot about yourself, a lot about other people, and to gain skills that will stand you in good stead for any future career.

Resident Assistant Scheduling

The Senior Resident Assistant is responsible for the scheduling of all Resident Assistants in his/her house throughout the semester. Each Resident Assistant works approximately one day per week and this schedule is established and passed out to the Resident Assistants at the beginning of each month. In the case where Resident Assistants wish to switch/trade duty days among themselves, they must first check with the Senior Resident Assistant and then once approved, mark the change on all the Resident Assistant's schedules that are posted on each Resident Assistant's door.



Memorial

University of Newfoundland

Student Housing & Food Services

December 1994

116

NAME: ^F1^

HOUSE: ^F2^

Resident Assistantship is contingent on the following requirements:

1. That you be in residence between 6:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Monday, January 9, 1995.
2. That you participate in student leadership seminars during each semester that you hold the position of Resident Assistant.
3. That during your time as an R.A. you maintain a 60% average and pass a minimum of three courses each semester.
4. That you not hold any other paying position without permission given by the Student Housing Office. Students who have the opportunity to work within the University in academics such as marking papers or instructing labs may be permitted to do so by applying in writing and obtaining the written permission of Student Housing. The Director of Student Housing reserves the right to require any R.A. to relinquish any or all other positions held that are deemed to interfere with R.A. position.
5. That you not have any outstanding fees with M.U.N.
6. That you remain in residence until 4:00 p.m. on the day of closing.
7. That you fulfil all other requirements of the Resident Assistant Contract.

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the cancellation of your Resident Assistantship.

DATE: _____ INITIALS: _____
Paton College Office

HAND DELIVERED



Memorial

University of Newfoundland

Student Housing & Food Services

December 1994

117

RESIDENT ASSISTANT EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

Birthdate: _____

S.I.N.: _____

Student No: _____

T-4 Home Address: _____

1~

Dear 2~:

We wish to confirm your appointment as Resident Assistant in 3~ House for the Winter Semester, January 9, 1995 to April 27, 1995.

Your stipend for the period will be \$420.00 and vacation pay at the rate of 4 % will be paid on a pro-rata basis. You will also be entitled to a single room free of charge.

You have been provided with a list of duties you are expected to perform and the requirements that must be met in order for you to retain your Resident Assistantship.

During the period of your employment either Memorial University or yourself will have the right to terminate this arrangement by giving two weeks notice of such intention.

Should you wish to accept this position on the terms outlined above, please sign in the proper position below.

Yours truly,

Gerard Hayes,
Assistant Director,
Student Housing & Food Services

RESIDENT ASSISTANT: _____

cc: Personnel Dept.

APPENDIX B

Resident Assistant Evaluation Form

Resident Assistant Evaluation Form

Dear Resident:

In our ongoing commitment to providing Paton College with strong residence leadership the Residence Life Office would appreciate your comments regarding the effectiveness of our Resident Assistants. Your input is very valuable and with it we are hoping to make constant improvements to our staff and to the residence experience, in general. Please help us by answering the following questions:

R.A.: _____

Date: _____

Floor: _____

House: _____

A = ALWAYS

S = SOMETIMES

N = NEVER

1. Has the R. A. made a reasonable effort to be accessible while not on duty? A__ S__ N__
2. Is the R. A. present in the house, at all times, while on duty? A__ S__ N__
3. Is the R. A. consistent and fair in dealing with violations of rules? A__ S__ N__
4. Does the R. A. adhere to house rules? A__ S__ N__
5. Does the R. A. make an effort to become involved in house and floor activities? A__ S__ N__
6. Does the R. A. encourage residents to participate in floor/house activities? A__ S__ N__
7. Does your R. A. demonstrate concern for the residents' well being? A__ S__ N__
8. Does the R. A. ensure that quiet hours are followed? A__ S__ N__
9. Is the R. A. effective in monitoring the physical condition of the floor to which he/she is assigned? A__ S__ N__
10. If you had a problem would you feel comfortable speaking with your R. A.? A__ S__ N__
11. My R. A. is effective in his/her role. A__ S__ N__

Please explain: _____

12. I would recommend (or not recommend) the return of my R. A. for next semester because:

13. I feel comfortable with the leadership provided by all
Resident Assistants in my House.

A ___ S ___ N ___

Please explain: _____

Signature: _____

Optional

* Please note that the specific details given here will not be revealed to the R. A. in question. Upon review of all evaluations the proctor will, however, discuss the R. A.'s overall performance with him/her. At this time specific strengths and weaknesses will be addressed.

APPENDIX C

Resident Assistant Evaluations

Forms

Student Housing and Food Services

Resident Assistant Evaluations

The evaluation procedure is intended to be used to provide feedback to each Resident Assistant regarding his/her performance. Therefore, it is important that all forms be completed accurately and thoroughly. It is to be emphasized that both positive and negative aspects should be commented on in the evaluations, to both encourage and recognize those areas that the R. A. excels in and to indicate those areas which need correction and improvement.

- After the eighth week of each semester all Resident Assistants will be required to complete a Resident Assistant Evaluation form for **ALL OTHER** Resident Assistants in his/her house, including the senior Resident Assistant.
- The proctor will hold a meeting to hand out the evaluation forms and explain the evaluation procedure with all the Resident Assistants. The R. A.'s should be strongly encouraged to fill out the forms immediately after the meeting while suggestions and comments made by the proctor are still fresh in their minds.
- Evaluations are anonymous but the R. A.'s should be encouraged to sign their evaluation sheets.

- Each R. A. should complete her/his evaluation forms at the same time to ensure fairness to the R. A.'s being evaluated.
- The evaluation form asks for numerical ranking in eight different areas related to the R. A. duties. Comments are invited for each of these areas.
- Please note that item nine, which asks for comments "on the R. A.'s specific strengths and/or weaknesses as well as overall effectiveness," must be completed. The comments here should substantiate the rankings of items one to eight. This section is particularly valuable when a summary evaluation sheet is being devised. R. A.'s should be informed that if item nine is left uncompleted then any rankings will be considered unsupported and therefore invalid.
- Completed evaluation forms must be returned to the proctor before the specified deadline date.
- The proctor will then complete a **RESIDENT ASSISTANT SUMMARY EVALUATION** form for each of the R. A.'s, by circling the average score for each item number one to eight and summarizing and/or quoting comments made by other R. A.'s in the appropriate section. The proctor should then fill in his/her comments in the space provided.

- The proctor is then to set up individual meetings with each R. A. in order to go over the Summary Evaluation and discuss the questions and/or problems noted on the evaluations.
- Each Resident Assistant is to sign his/her summary evaluation form, thereby indicating that he/she is aware of his/her evaluation and comments included in that evaluation, and has discussed it in full with the proctor of the house.
- ALL evaluation forms are to be sent over to the Residence Life Office where they will be reviewed, commented on and filed. A copy of the Summary Evaluation sheet will then be sent out to each R. A. for their own record.

Although all procedural steps have been outlined in this evaluation procedure for the proctor to follow, there inevitably arises extenuating circumstances and situations that are not covered by these guidelines.

Suggested Itinerary....

7 pm Wednesday evenings - meeting with R. A.'s, hand out evaluation forms.

12 pm Friday - deadline for all R. A.'s to hand in completed evaluation forms.

- Saturday and Sunday - compile summary evaluation sheets for each R.A., provide proctor's comments and prepare discussion topics for individual meetings to be held with R. A.'s next week.
- Monday and Wednesday - meet individually with each Resident Assistant.
- 12 pm Thursday - ensure that all forms have been taken over to the Residence Life Office.

What needs to be mentioned at the meeting...?

1. Reiterate the fact that the evaluations are a positive experience and that constructive criticism and praise are "good."
2. Encourage the R. A.'s to be open, honest and frank.
3. Encourage the R. A.'s to sign the evaluations that they complete.
Assure the R. A.'s that confidentiality will be maintained unless extreme extenuating circumstances arise.
4. Remind them that they must comment on item nine in order for their evaluation to be supported and considered valuable.
5. Tell the R. A.'s not to be "nit picky," or comment on single isolated incidents (i.e., forgot to lock the door on first floor once) or be afraid to give compliments or praise where due.

6. Remind the R.A.'s that one does not have to wait for evaluations in order to feel free to bring up problems arising in the house or on a particular wing.
7. Encourage the R. A.'s to go and fill the evaluation forms out immediately after the meeting, before it is too late in the night and sleepiness clouds and muddles their judgement, and while what the proctor had to say is fresh in their minds. Discourage the R. A.'s from discussing the evaluations among themselves, to prevent becoming biased by other's opinions.

Suggested questions to ask before filling out the evaluation...

- Is this a new R.A.?
- Does he/she show potential?
- If you have a criticism or noted a problem...has it happened more than once?
- Would you anticipate this problem to get worse/better if left unmentioned?
- Why are you criticizing...to improve the person, or to get even?
- Does this person lack/possess confidence? If lacking, what can you say to boost it?

What to do once all the evaluations have been handed in...

- sort evaluations into piles according to individuals.
- set aside a reasonable amount of time to go over each Resident Assistant's evaluation.
- sit and read through all evaluation forms for one Resident Assistant.
Do not write out proctor's comments until all sheets have been read.
- prepare Summary Evaluation Form by circling the average number for each ranking (i.e., if the individual received 4, 3, 4, 2 and 5 on item 3 from all the evaluation forms then on the summary sheet circle a 4 for item 3).
- look for inconsistencies in evaluations among the different Resident Assistants. Look for trends in weaknesses and strengths in each R. A. Note these and bring them up in conversation when meeting with the R. A. to discuss the evaluation.
- in the area for R. A.'s comments summarize or quote any statement written on the evaluation forms.
- in the space allocated for the proctor's comments assert both positive and negative feed-back accordingly.

- when writing in your comments be aware of the tone, assuring at all times that is positive even when asserting problems, remembering that the Resident Assistants will be reading these.
- if there is a problem mentioned, be specific in defining what it is, introduce corrective measures and the behaviour desired resulting from this.
- be careful not to undermine your positive attitude by sounding nonchalant or passive. Be firm and fair in your assertions and communicate in no uncertain terms.

What to do when there are inconsistencies on an evaluation...

This tends to be a very rare but difficult problem that arises during evaluations. This is not to be confused with a difference in opinion where someone has commented that they feel this R. A. is "absolutely wonderful" and another evaluation has the same R. A. just "toeing the line." These are general and very non-specific differences and because of their abstract and indefinite nature would prove to be laborious to define and amend.

On the other hand if there appears an outright and blatant contradiction of opinion and persuasion on the effectiveness of an R. A., then a subtle yet probing investigation will be necessary. An example would be if one evaluation finds the R.A. to "be never home when on duty" while four other

evaluations find the same R. A. "very accessible and always available when on duty."

The R.A. whose evaluation this appeared on should be made aware that there was a concern, and depending on denial or acceptance of such allegations the proctor will determine whether furthering the course of action to involve to her R. A.'s, residents and the R.A. who made such claims will be necessary.

Keep in mind at all times that in situations that are extraordinary in circumstances and ill-defined in how to be handled, the proctor is encouraged to contact the Resident Life Office to discuss the situation.

FINAL NOTE --

Evaluations can result in being either a positive or negative experience depending on the approach and introduction to them and the actual content of the appraisal. As the proctor, it will be entirely up to you to cast out established fallacies and initiate a "good attitude" towards evaluations. To have a competent and effective team of Resident Assistants in your house two objectives must be established and met:

1. The goals and expectations you have for your Resident Assistants must be well-defined in no uncertain terms at the beginning of the semester.

2. Evaluations are a continual process and feedback should be an on-going form of communication between the proctor and the Resident Assistants.

The most effectual method of providing feedback, positive or negative, is to give it immediately. Define what it is that you dislike/like and outline exactly what it is that you would prefer to see or would like to see continued. If you, as the proctor, make a point of developing this rapport then "evaluation time" should not prove itself to hold any great surprises....

APPENDIX D

Approval/Permission Letters/Interview Schedule

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Faculty Committee for Ethical Review of
Research Involving Human Subjects**

Certificate of Approval

Investigator: *Mr. Robert J. Shea*

Investigator's Workplace: *Faculty of education, MUN*

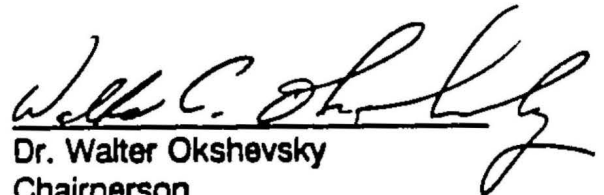
Supervisor: *Dr. Dustin Harte*

Title of Research: *"An evaluation of the performance appraisal*

Approval Date: *process for pre-professionals presently
utilized in the Department of Student Housing*

25/11/94 *Memorial University of Newfoundland*

The Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the protocol and procedures as described in this research proposal and we conclude that they conform to the University's guidelines for research involving human subjects.



Dr. Walter Okshevsky
Chairperson
Ethics Review Committee

Members: Dr. Walter Okshevsky
Dr. Tim Seifert
Dr. Dennis Sharpe
Dr. Amarjit Singh
Dr. Patricia Canning

December 9, 1994

Dr. Wayne Ludlow
Dean
Student Affairs and Services
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5S7

Dear Dr. Ludlow:

My name is Robert Shea and I am a candidate for the degree of Master of Education with a specialization in educational administration at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

I am presently undertaking a research project within the Department of Student Housing and Food Services, under the direction of Dr. Austin Harte of the Faculty of Education at Memorial.

The purpose of this project is to assess the performance appraisal process for resident assistants in the Department of Student Housing at Memorial in light of four dimensions proposed by Ondrack and Oliver (1986) and to determine the extent to which the model used reflects current thought and practice in the field. The four dimensions to be examined include: the purpose of performance appraisal; the major components of the performance appraisal process for paraprofessional resident assistants; the process employed to measure the performance appraisal of paraprofessional residence staff; and an evaluation of outcomes and their congruence with the stated purpose of the performance appraisal process.

Data gathering will require tape recorded interviews with two key informants within the Department of Student Housing and Food Services at Memorial. These key informants are Dr. Brian Johnston, Director of Student Housing and Food Services and Ms. Shona Perry-Maidment, Manager of Residence Life. Data gathering will require the researcher to obtain all documents regarding the appraisal process currently in place. All audiotapes used for purposes of data gathering will be destroyed after the completion of the research. Documents include: the recent performance appraisal process for resident assistants; the mission statement of the Department of Student Housing and Food Services; and excerpts from the proctors manual relating to performance appraisal.

Please note that participation is completely voluntary and that the subjects have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and/or refrain from answering whatever questions they prefer to omit. The information gathered by this study is confidential and no individuals will be identified. The research results will be available to the subjects upon request.

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and meets the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education and Memorial University of Newfoundland. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of this research, Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate

Dean, Research and Development, Faculty of Education, who is not directly involved with the study may act as a resource person for any concerns or questions you may have.

I trust that you will consider this research project worthy of your support. If you do support this research could you please sign on the line noted below. If you have further questions please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely;

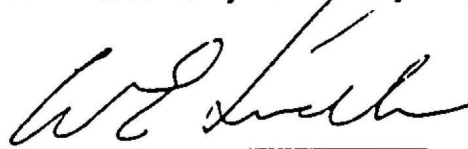


Robert Shea B.A; B.S.W. (R.S.W.)
(709) 737-2033 Office
(709) 753-0458 Home

I, Dr. Wayne Ludlow, hereby give permission for Mr. Robert Shea to undertake the interviews and document analysis necessary to complete his research on the performance appraisal process for resident assistants in the Department of Student Housing and Food Services at Memorial University of Newfoundland, as described in this letter dated December 9, 1994. I understand that participation of key informants and provision of documents for analysis is entirely voluntary and that permission may be withdrawn at any time.

91-01-20 -

Date



Signature

December 9, 1994

Ms. Shona Perry-Maidment
Manager of Residence Life
Student Housing and Food Services
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5S7

Dear Ms. Perry- Maidment;

My name is Robert Shea and I am a candidate for the degree of Master of Education with a specialization in Educational Administration at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

I am presently undertaking a research project within the Department of Student Housing and Food Services, under the direction of Dr. Austin Harte of the Faculty of Education at Memorial.

The purpose of this project is to assess the performance appraisal process for resident assistants in the Department of Student Housing at Memorial in light of four dimensions proposed by Ondrack and Oliver (1986) and to determine the extent to which the model used reflects current thought and practice in the field. The four dimensions to be examined include; the purpose of performance appraisal, the major components of the performance appraisal process for para-professional resident assistants, the process employed to measure the performance appraisal of para-professional residence staff, and an evaluation of outcomes and their congruence with the stated purpose of the performance appraisal process.

Data gathering will require the researcher to tape record an interview with yourself as a key informant within the Department of Student Housing and Food Services at Memorial. Data gathering will also require the researcher to obtain all documents regarding the appraisal process currently in place. Documents include the present performance appraisal process for resident assistants; the mission statement of the Department of Student Housing and Food Services, and the proctors manual excerpts relating to performance appraisal.

Please note that participation is completely voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and or refrain from answering whatever questions you prefer to omit. The information gathered by this study is confidential and no individuals will be identified. The research results and transcription of tapes will be available to you if you so desire. All audiotapes used for purposes of data gathering will be destroyed after the completion of the research.

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and meets the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education and Memorial University of Newfoundland. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of this research, Dr. Patricia Canning, Associate Dean, Research and Development, Faculty of Education, who is not directly involved with the

study, may act as a resource person for any concerns or questions you may have.

I trust that you consider this research project worthy of your participation. All information is strictly confidential and no individuals will be identified. If you do support this research could you please sign on the line noted below. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely;



Robert Shea B.A; B.S.W. (R.S.W.)
(709) 737-2033 Office
(709) 753-0458 Home

I, Ms. Shona Perry-Maidment, hereby give consent to participate in the interviews and provide the documents necessary to complete research on the performance appraisal process for resident assistants in the Department of Student Housing and Food Services at Memorial University of Newfoundland, as undertaken by Mr. Robert Shea. I understand that participation of key informants and provision of documents for analysis is entirely voluntary and that permission may be withdrawn at any time. I also understand that all information is strictly confidential and that no individuals will be identified.

Jan. 17/75
Date

Shona Perry-Maidment
Signature

Interview Schedule

Dr. Brian Johnston
Director of Student Housing and
Food Services
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Ms. Shona Perry - Maidment
Manager of Residence Life
Department of Student Housing and Food Services
Memorial University of Newfoundland

I understand that you were the _____ at the time the current policy for the performance appraisal of resident assistants was developed.

1. Were you involved in the development of the current policy for performance appraisal of resident assistants. If so;

- i) what was your role ?; and
- ii) can you tell me why this policy was developed ?
 - a) what factors and forces drove the development of the policy ?;
- iii) how was this policy initially developed ?
- iv) who was involved in policy development ?
- v) what activities were undertaken to implement the policy ?
- vi) has there been any subsequent reviews ?

2. What organizational and/or individual objectives were considered when developing the policy and subsequent instrument for appraising the performance of resident assistant performance? If so

- i) what do you consider the organization's objectives in evaluating resident assistants ?
- ii) what do you consider the individual objectives for evaluating resident assistants ?

3. During the preparation stage for performance appraisal do you consider the following aspects of importance; if so - why ? if not- why not?

- i) How important do you consider planning (eg; pre conferencing, notification to those being evaluated) to be in the performance appraisal process ? If so - Why? If not Why Not?
 - ii) How important is organizational purpose in the performance appraisal process of resident assistants ? If so - Why? If Not Why Not?
 - iii) How important are the types of criteria used to the outcome of the appraisal ? If so - Why? If not Why Not?
4. What types of criteria do you think should be included as indicators in the performance appraisal process?
5. Who do you think should collect the information for the performance appraisal process ? Why this individual or group of individuals ?
6. How much time do you consider to be enough in collecting this information ? i) Why this amount ?
7. Who should the culmination of information/reports be shared ? Why ?
8. Should there be any follow up to the report ?
- i) Who should do the follow up ?
 - ii) What should be the time frame ?
9. What opportunities are there for the development of the individual resident assistant throughout this policy?
- i) Do you consider these opportunities adequate? Why or why not?
10. Do you know if the policy has been complied with by all individuals involved?
- i) If not why do you think it hasn't been ?
11. How much time is spent on administering the policy ?
- i) Do you think more time or less time should be spent on this aspect of administration ?

12. What impact do you think the present policy has had in terms of expected outcome ?

- i) If so why ?
- ii) If not why not?

13) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your time !

