

## Resident Assistants: Students, Staff, or Somewhere in Between?

### Abstract:

Like many universities across the country, Georgia State has an increasing number of students who live on campus or desire to do so. For those who do obtain a room at one of the university's residence halls, all of them will meet, in some capacity, a Resident Assistant (RA). RAs are students as well, but they are compensated in a variety of ways to become the cornerstone of the residence hall experience for their peers on the same floor, in the building, and across campus. These services include programming and supervising, being both an administrator and a mentor, acting as a friend and an authority – an eclectic assortment of roles other students generally don't have to think about navigating.

Through qualitative methods such as ethnographic interviews and autoethnography, I examine the ways in which we, RAs, balance our roles and how we decide where to draw the line. In addition, I analyze how successful, or unsuccessful, strategies to accomplish these endeavors correlate with job satisfaction, and I conclude with an exploration on gender's role in the application of differing approaches. By understanding the way gender influences the strategies RAs use to tackle role conflict in their job, I seek to gain a better understanding of my own job satisfaction, provide a way to improve the experience for future RAs at GSU and other universities, and provide insight for professional staff members working with and training staffs representing a variety of genders.