Recommendation for STAR Camp Resident Assistant (RA) Position

Background Information

The STAR Program: STAR is an acronym for Science Teacher Attraction and Retention. ISU's Center for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Education has established STAR Clubs for Iowa high school and middle school students potentially interested in science education as a career. This includes both prospective secondary science teachers and prospective elementary teachers that would like an emphasis in science. Funding comes from a U.S. Department of Education grant. Dr. Tom Andre is the P.I. for this grant.

Club activities include science and education components and could include, for example, serving as a lab assistant, developing WebQuests, and organizing a district science fair. Club members and advisors will be invited to attend a STAR summer camp. Non-club participants are also recruited and accepted as space permits. We are currently recruiting RAs for these camps.

STAR Camps: We plan to offer four camps this summer:

1) Toying with Technology will present middle school students with design problems and opportunities to engineer solutions to those problems. Participants will also design Lego robots to perform specified functions. Staff members and students from ISU’s Materials Science and Engineering Department will serve as instructors for this camp. This camp is based on the ISU campus, with housing in the ISU Memorial Union.

2) Iowa Lakeside Lab participants will have an opportunity to work with Lakeside faculty, staff, and students on a variety of hands-on ecology projects in prairies, wetlands, and lakes. These will range from water quality studies to studies of prairie and wetland restoration to studies of local amphibians and reptiles. In addition, participants will work with ISU staff members, students, and graduate students on an educational component of the camp. STAR offers both a middle school and a high school session. Iowa Lakeside Laboratory is located on West Okoboji Lake in northwest Iowa. Lodging for the camp will be in cabins at Lakeside Lab.

3) WYOOutdoors will provide high school students the opportunity to investigate the geology and ecology of northern Wyoming and western South Dakota. Camp highlights are planned to include Badlands National Park, the Black Hills, the Big Horn Mountains, Yellowstone National Park, and more! This camp will include tent camping and hiking at high elevations and in bear country. ISU staff members, students, and graduate students, and local experts such as national park rangers, will serve as instructors for the camp. Lodging for the camp will include camping, motel stays, and, for the last two nights, Iowa State University dormitories. Travel will be in 12-passenger ISU vans.

4) Biotechnology high school students will experience activities such as DNA fingerprinting, DNA extraction, bacterial transformation, model organism genetics, DNA isolation and analysis, PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction), TLC (Thin-layer Chromatography), recombinant DNA transformation, GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) technology and testing, and bioinformatics. Mike Zeller, ISU Biotechnology Outreach Education Coordinator for the Office of Biotechnology, will serve as the instructor for this camp. This camp is based on the ISU campus.

An educational component will be important in all camps. Students will return from the camps with lessons, activities, and/or skills that they have developed to help teach the topics that they have experienced in their fieldwork.
Background Information: Description of RA Duties and Responsibilities

The Resident Assistant (RA) for STAR Camps will serve as a liaison between STAR Camp staff and program participants. The RA will be the direct representative of STAR for the participants and will have the role of helping participants have a meaningful educational experience. For STAR Camps based on the ISU campus, RAs will also serve as a liaison between Department of Residence staff and program participants. The RA position is a challenging one. RAs may be called upon at any time by students and staff. Situations will arise that require the full abilities of the RA. The RA will need to recognize his/her limitations and seek the help of other staff when needed. An outline of RA responsibilities follows:

1. Training
   a) RA group training
   b) Individual training on ISU Professional Policies and Procedures (e.g. Policy on Sexual Harassment, Policy on Racial and Ethnic Harassment, Policy on Consenting Relationships, Human Subjects Research Training)

2. Provide leadership to the STAR program. Be a good role model.

3. Assist in fieldwork and classwork; assist students with educational activities, plans, and lesson plans.

4. Be alert to student needs, both physical and mental.
   a. Be a good listener.
   b. Encourage individual growth.
   c. Help students learn problem-solving and conflict management skills.
   d. Appreciate diversity

5. Communicate
   a. Communicate concerns to appropriate program staff.
   b. Respect confidences.
   c. Use discretion in all communications.

6. Intervene in the event of rule violations.

7. Be prepared for emergencies such as illness, fire, tornado and be sure students are familiar with emergency procedures.

Visit our web site at www.public.iastate.edu/-mstar
Recommendation for STAR Camp Resident Assistant Position

Iowa State University
Department of Curriculum & Instruction

Section I. To be completed by applicant.

Applicant's Name _______________________________________________

Name of Reference ______________________________________________

Title _______________________________ Phone No. _________________

By providing this form to the reference listed and to STAR Camp, I am giving my permission for the reference to provide the information requested to ISU STAR Camp about my educational record and academic performance.

_________________________________________________                    ____________________
Applicant signature           Date

_____  Applicant: Please initial this line if you wish to waive your right to inspect this recommendation.

Section II. To be completed by reference.

Please use the following ranking scale:

0: no opportunity to observe
1: needs improvement
2: fair
3: good
4: excellent

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Rank (please circle)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>Communication skills</td>
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<td>Leadership skills</td>
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<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
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<td>Organizational skills</td>
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<td>Assertiveness</td>
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<td>Approachability</td>
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<td>Appreciation for diversity</td>
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Please respond to the following questions as completely as possible, including, where applicable, a discussion of strengths and areas yet to be developed by the applicant.

How long have you known the applicant? In what capacity?

In your opinion, how well does this applicant demonstrate responsibility? (Consider such traits as conscientiousness, organization, time management, etc.)

How well, in your opinion, does this applicant communicate? (Consider the ability to communicate thoughts, listening skills, and ability to accept constructive criticism.)

Recommendation:

_____ I recommend this applicant without reservation

_____ I have the following reservations about recommending this applicant for this RA position:

Signature ___________________________ Date __________

Please return this form by March 15, 2004, directly (not through the applicant if applicant has waived right to inspect this recommendation) to:

Center for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Education, ATTN: Kathy Megivern
N157 Lagomarcino Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011