**Resident Assistants face the challenge of being overworked and underpaid**

After Resident Assistants worked tireless hours and did not receive fair pay and benefits last semester, WKU has lowered their hours and provided free housing in a failed effort to reduce overworking RA’s.

According to WKU’s official [website](https://www.wku.edu/housing/employment/ra.php), some of the basic duties of an RA is to serve as a role model to floor residents, create a welcoming environment for the students as well as work at the front desk.

“The Resident Assistant (RA) is a unique, live-in, student leadership position in the Department of Housing and Residence Life and is an important member of the Residence Life team,” WKU’s website said.

Junior Emma Williams, a former RA, said that after applying for an RA position and learning more about her job, she did not expect to be overworked, underpaid and treated unfairly.

While she enjoyed the leadership opportunities of overseeing her floor that being an RA provided for her, she soon became stressed out along with other RAs, Williams said. The stress they encountered caused divisions between coworkers.

“At the beginning of last semester, RAs were upset about working the desk night shifts with no pay, so some would not show up, forcing their on-call partners to work the entirety of those hours or face consequences of being fired,” Williams said.

RAs were constantly having to work unnecessarily long night hours without pay, Williams said. Many RAs had pulled all-nighters working night shifts to try and cover the desk or deal with situations regarding residents that they were not properly trained for.

“One weekend when I was on call, we had a domestic violence case and did not know what to do as a result of our poor training,” Williams said. “During these situations, we were not pai,d and that caused tension as people did not want to respond to the situations.”

While dealing with being underpaid and overworked, RA’s soon became upset that WKU was the only university in Kentucky that did not get free housing while being an RA, Williams said.

“There was tension between buildings as we only got $1,500 off of housing regardless of what dorm we were in,” Williams said. “RAs in my building [Regents Hall] were paying more for a room than those not working for housing and living in a private room at Pearce Ford Tower.”

As a result of the poor treatment RAs were experiencing, Williams said she took on a new position as an Apartment Community Advisor at Kentucky Street Apartments. Here, she only works 10 hours at the desk a week with no night shifts, Williams said.

“I am very pleased that I changed positions,” Williams said. “It has allowed me to focus more on my schoolwork and, in turn, has improved my mental and physical health as I have more time for those things now.”

Senior Ira Meadows said she has been an RA since Fall of 2023 at PFT and was a Desk Assistant before she became an RA. Meadows said that while being a DA, she experienced being overworked but did not anticipate the same thing to happen once she took the RA position.

Meadows said DA’s still have the opportunity to get more pay because RAs are no longer allowed to work night shifts. When a DA works from midnight to 4 a.m. or 4 a.m. to 8 a.m., they are paid $13.50.

“The RA compensation package includes an hourly wage rate of $9.00 an hour at which the RA is paid 20 hours every week,” WKU’s official website said.

While RAs were being overworked during night hours last semester, they did not expect to have their night shifts completely cut this semester, Meadows said.

Along with the increase of night shift pay, the technology policy has also changed from last semester to this semester, Meadows said. When working slow desk shifts, RAs are now allowed to have technology and work on their homework.

“After housing attempted to improve our workload, things have only gotten worse as they continue to ask us to work when we are not scheduled to work,” Meadows said.

While RAs are allowed to pick up 29 hours a pay period, they were told that they would only have to work 20 hours a pay period, Meadows said. They continue to call them in for night shifts at the last minute after being told they were no longer allowed to work night shifts anymore.

“I understand housings approach of cutting our night shift hours in an attempt to prevent us from being overworked, but the problem has stayed the same as they continuously change our hours,” Meadows said.

Housing and Residence Life has been contacted about this issue and official documents containing raises have been requested with no response after 72 hours.