

STATEMENT ON JUST CAUSE FOR RESIDENT ASSISTANTS AND PEER MENTORS

The university agrees that due process is an important element that needs to be included in labor agreements. That is why there is an appeals process in place in this contract that allows an individual to contest or correct sanctions they believe were unfairly imposed on them. We believe adding another layer of appeals is not necessary. Contracts between the university and resident assistants, beginning in 2003, have never included a just cause article for this reason.

This bargaining unit is made up of fewer than 500 undergraduate students who serve as Resident Assistants and Peer Mentors. Resident Assistants work 20 hours per week for 34 weeks and Peer Mentors work 15 hours per week for 34 weeks. Just Cause provisions in labor agreements protect the jobs of employees who have served a probationary period of normally six months or one year and have no other practical way to challenge their termination.

Most terminations in this unit are for violations of the Code of Student Conduct or because of not having met minimum grade point averages. Both grades and student conduct violations can be appealed through existing university appeal processes, which these student employees can access. They are normally put on paid administrative leave while they appeal.

We have proposed a formal process in bargaining and will continue to work with the union to see if we can agree on a system that provides an opportunity to guarantee a chance to have a fair hearing but does not include the time consuming and costly process of labor arbitration. All the costs of this contract are paid by the fees students pay for living in residence halls, and our goal is to spend that money on providing more services to the students and student employees.