

Stephanie Van Beek
“Cultivating NRHH at WWU”

National Residence Hall Honorary
Member of the Year

Western Washington University
No Frills
January 2004

Imagine your local farm. Though it seems the farm's production comes easily, when you look deeper there are many intricate layers and individual efforts that must be invested to make it function. Although the comparison may not be the most flattering, Stephanie's work operates like a farm. Stephanie grew up on a dairy farm gaining intimate knowledge of the details of operation. She knows that every now and then you have to get down and dirty cleaning out the stalls and scooping the manure to complete the process.

Stephanie spent her entire childhood learning to operate a farm, living, working, caring, and interacting with its parts. In fact, recently her family farm has suffered set backs and Stephanie has spent countless hours assisting her family in keeping the farm functioning. While experiencing a great deal of stress at home, she still remained dedicated and hardworking toward her job. In addition to spending time at home and bettering our NRHH chapter, Stephanie has maintained a 4.0 GPA since becoming a member of NRHH.

Stephanie Van Beek is the backbone of Western Washington University's chapter of National Residence Hall Honorary. Like a farmer, Stephanie oversees and directs many of NRHH's operations. She is the cheerleader, organizer, and one of the best examples of a strong leader. Her hard work and dedication are instrumental in the programming and continuing excellence of our chapter. Like any farm, the end product is only as good as the ability of the individual groups to come together and maximize success. Stephanie has a passion for NRHH that extends beyond the basic requirements; she has spent many hours and evenings diligently working to help NRHH function smoothly and be able to recognize Western residents for their outstanding accomplishments. She is also the heart of our executive committee as she continually offers words of encouragement.

Coming into this year, Western's NRHH chapter was in absolute shambles. Our fences had broken down; there was a general feeling of disorganization within the system. If NRHH were a tractor, then our chapter would have been rusting and sitting on blocks waiting for the right person to fix it to its potential. The constitution and budget that the chapter was working with were both more than two years old, and the prior year had left almost no records concerning programming and membership. Stephanie was instrumental in helping to guide the organization in reforming and updating the constitution, addressing concerns from last year, and compiling a list of our current members. Furthermore, Stephanie helped to develop a budget which not only allowed us to put on several large programs, but also to recognize students in a very generous way.

Stephanie helped rebuild the foundation of the entire NRHH chapter into a well oiled machine. One example of her dedication is her incredible revamping of our Of the Month process. For the last several years, Western has been using custom designed and outdated OTM forms. After a few months of working with these forms, Stephanie instigated a change. Not only did we switch to regional approved forms, but we also chose to make online submissions the preferred method of submission. The online submissions are both environment friendly (saves paper) and more efficient. This new "streamlined" process enabled us to read the ever-growing number of submissions. Though the transition to new forms and the online submission option has been challenging for some residence halls, Stephanie has graciously distributed information pages, answered email queries, and patiently waited for residence halls to catch up. Her tireless effort is what has enabled us to make

these changes. It was a lot of grunt work, but the stalls have to be mucked now and again in order to keep everything going well.

In effort to increase the quality of the OTM submissions, Stephanie proposed a new set of criteria. The largest change was in the minimum requirements. The executive board, with Stephanie's guidance, changed word requirements from no minimum to 100 words. A farmer would accept nothing less than the best. Stephanie's attention for detail increased the quality of submissions and made residents truly think about the nomination. Despite the new requirements bringing a great deal of confusion and question, Stephanie sent out numerous letters and answered countless questions in order to keep positive change. Stephanie also began holding student accountable for submitting OTM's by the deadline and selecting the right category. These requirements may sound harsh, but through them we were able to increase quality and remove the subjectivity of guessing intended categories. Like any farm, the rules are strict and all must abide by them to complete the work.

In addition to form changes, Stephanie updated our process for responding to submissions. On a farm, taking care of employees is a must, and thanking those who help the operation is always important. She has made a considerable effort to acknowledge every submission and the effort that went into writing it. Every person that submits an OTM receives a thank you postcard; every person nominated gets notified of their accomplishments; and both the writer and recipient of the winning OTMs get still another note. Stephanie also ordered special certificates featuring the PACURH frog to give to all individual OTM winners, as well as a separate certificate to give to halls winning programming categories. This process requires hours of work to hand-address each postcard, but Stephanie has never complained. She seems pleased to get the opportunity to brighten someone's day and thank them for their service and commitment to Western's residence hall system. Furthermore, due to a change in OTM criteria in order to improve OTM quality, Stephanie received a large amount of criticism concerning the new standards. She was quick to create yet another postcard in order to acknowledge OTMs which didn't meet requirements, and sent out numerous e-mails to help explain the new standards.

One way Stephanie sought to boost OTM submissions and involvement was to create "OTMs in a box," an OTM kit containing paper OTMs, examples of good and bad OTMs, popcorn, and some tips on how to write them. This was a completely new and unique idea in our chapter, and helped spread the word and knowledge about NRHH all across campus. Residents in every hall appreciated the convenience of the kits, and these kits helped to boost OTM submissions significantly. Often times, in any area of life, the rules are not always clear. Stephanie has worked to create concise documents so those involved are always doing their job effectively.

The best farmers have experience. They know how everything works from observing and completing the tasks. Once a farmer has grown up learning how to operate a successful farm, they then can go out and create their own story. This in not Stephanie's first year in a leadership position. Last year she was the secretary of one of our residence halls, Beta/Gamma. While in this position, Stephanie helped plan events in both Beta/Gamma's community and in the entire Western community. As part of the executive board, she helped organize an all-campus event called "Culture Shock." As part of her duties, she wrote many OTMs for her hall, including some that won. Stephanie was also highly involved in the NRHH coin drive last year, helping to generate donations for her hall and increase awareness about the program. Toward the end of the year Stephanie became involved in Beta/Gamma's bid for Hall of the Year in both the local and national levels. Working closely with the hall council president, Stephanie tirelessly documented every program put on in Beta/Gamma (both RA and resident programs), every resident's involvement in clubs and intramural

teams, and produced a clear and concise Hall of the Year bid. Her hard work was evident in the stellar writing and complete information.

Like those in a farming career, Stephanie moved up in the field and began helping in the direction of the NRHH farm. She was no longer an outsider looking in and wanting change. At the end of the year she became a member of NRHH. Having become a part of the organization, she wanted to get more involved. She ran for the position of Vice President, and after an interview and quick presentation, she was elected. As part of her transition into NRHH, she met with the departing Vice President and discussed potential leadership activities, skills required, and all of her duties. It was apparent after that meeting that this was a group that Stephanie was passionate about. During the spring prior to assuming her position, she was the only general member to attend meetings. She spent a significant amount of time training, which included working with last year's exec board on May OTM local selections in order to learn about the process, and in June she handled all of Western's regional submissions on her own. She came to our first meeting with lots of ideas and suggestions, and had already begun her OTM revolution.

One area where Stephanie has truly excelled is in awards and recognition. Every member of a farming operation (even down to the pigs) must feel supported and appreciated for their hard work, NRHH is no different. Not only has she acknowledged and read every OTM submission, but she has brought even more ideas to the table. She researched different gifts to send out to winning submissions and recipients, and brought magazines and brochures to meetings with pages earmarked with possible items. As a group, we chose to hand out little magnets with our theme of the year ("Change the World") and the NRHH symbol. Stephanie went ahead and designed and ordered the magnets without any assistance. She was instrumental in creating yet another way to recognize residents. In a farm, it is important to have the ability to work without constant guidance. Stephanie was also to use her experience in working independently as she took control of her position and began instant positive changes.

Stephanie also looked into creating plaques for our office. We now have two plaques to highlight all the accomplishments that Western has experienced. One plaque is for Hall of the Year, and it dates back as far as we have information about. This plaque is important for our chapter because it really demonstrates the pride that Hall of the Year entails. The second plaque is for Community of the Month. This plaque is very important because every month we receive many OTMs detailing the outstanding things each hall does, and to win that particular OTM category is quite an honor. Stephanie has already committed to maintaining these plaques, taking the time to getting them engraved with the winners every month. These two plaques represent Stephanie's commitment to recognition at every step of the process. She acknowledges the success of the past, while making a sincere effort to thank and praise those who go the extra mile on a monthly basis.

Recognition of hard work is significant on farm. Often times it is also important to not always look at the group but at yourself, as a farmer, and what you do to help everyone succeed. One of the most personal accomplishments for Stephanie this year was an OTM about her winning both locally and regionally. Stephanie has made huge contributions to our chapter, so for her to be recognized by all the schools in our region was a huge accomplishment, and shows the degree of her involvement and success. Even the local victory was significant for Stephanie as our chapter routinely processes 80+ OTMs a month.

One of the goals that our executive board decided to take care of was updating our website. As we continue to move on in technology it is difficult for operations such as farms to update themselves, but if the leader wants a change they can make it happen. This was vital because of our switch to online OTM submissions. Despite never having worked with a

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website before, Stephanie figured out who the right people to talk to were, and initiated a continuing dialogue with them about possible changes and updates. Stephanie also updated the membership application on our website, fixing the errors that were due to its outdated nature. While not her job, Stephanie did this on her own in order to benefit the organization. Thanks to Stephanie, we now have a superb website, with correct and relevant information and links to regional and national affiliates. Now residents with questions can access our website and find up-to-date help.

Another goal our chapter decided to attempt was to put on a large program a quarter in addition to several other functions. While planning our schedule for the year, Stephanie brought up a great idea. She had participated in an event called “Breakfast for Best S.E.L.F.”

Dear PACURH, NRHH, RBD and NCC's which was a fundraiser for a summer program that provides a supplementary education for students that may not receive the right attention during the regular school year. Stephanie's interest and passion for this program persuaded us to look into either putting it on ourselves or creating an all-campus coin drive to help out the program. The idea for this program and her influential interest are prime examples of Stephanie's commitment to positive change. Before the executive board was able to begin planning Stephanie has already contacted quest speakers including the president of the organization, parents, and children to discuss the impact of the program. Her awareness of others around her, including people outside of our school's campus, and her interest in service, are an asset to any group she belongs to. She has a tremendous heart and spirit. Her strength as a leader and her time management skills are incredible. Stephanie has the ability to prioritize her schedule so that she completes the most important tasks first, but also allows time for her extracurricular activities as well.

Stephanie has formed a relationship with others in our region. This is important on a farm because one must be able to communicate with those who surround them in order to know important information for operation. She signed up for the PACURH listserv and corresponds with others about program ideas and other issues. This connection to the region helps keep our chapter involved in regional activities. Stephanie understands the regional requirements and we care constantly referring to her knowledge in order to run our chapter according to policy. Because of Stephanie's knowledge about the region WWU has already won two regional OTM's. Stephanie spends countless hours rewriting and editing local OTM's in order for them to compete well at the regional level.

Without the farmer, the farm would collapse into a state of anarchy. Likewise, without Stephanie our NRHH chapter would fall apart. Every aspect of our chapter owes a certain degree of gratitude to Stephanie, and it is the chapter's honor to present her to the region and the nation with this bid.

“That'll do, little pig. That'll do.” (Babe)

~ January 25, 2004

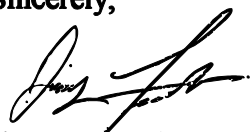
NRHH RBD, NCC's
PACURH Business Meeting
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, CA 94720

I am writing on behalf of Western Washington University's National Residence Hall Honorary to recommend Stephanie Van Beek for National Residence Hall Honorary Member of the Year. I have observed Stephanie's passion for NRHH since the start of the year. She has made NRHH more popular this year and having the effect that OTM submissions are going up to an all time high. With her work on the OTM's Western has won a couple of regional OTM'S, a feat that has not happened in quite some time.

Stephanie plays a vital role in NRHH as Vice-President. With the untimely and unexpected resignation of the President, she is stepping up to the challenge of leading a chapter that is in desperate need of membership. Under Stephanie's guidance the membership is expected to rise dramatically. NRHH is about to reach the summit on their quest for membership. Stephanie's role in this drive is advertising as well as organizing a better way to keep track of applications and an updated list of current members. With her dedication to this process, the other executive board members have an easier time completing their respective duties.

Stephanie has the willingness to go the extra mile that has inspired others to make NRHH the best it can be. Without any hesitation by the NRHH council, her dedication of service has earned her the honor of being member of the year.

Sincerely,



Jimmy French
Western Washington University
National Communications Coordinator

January 28, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

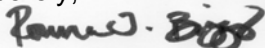
I am writing a letter of recommendation and support on behalf of Stephanie Van Beek who is bidding for NRHH Member of the Year. I have had the opportunity to work with Stephanie as her advisor for the 2003-04 academic year. In her role as the Vice President for the Western Washington University chapter of National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH), I have observed Stephanie in a significant leadership position that focuses on creating a spirit of pride and recognition within our residential community.

Stephanie's main role as Vice President is to lead our campus recognition efforts, including overseeing the Of the Month (OTM) process. Stephanie has been diligent in obtaining regional and national information regarding successful implementation of the OTM process, and has created "how-to" kits for each residence hall council. She has updated forms and processes to be in alignment with regional and national expectations, and has updated an electronic submission process to create a more convenient and user-friendly option for students. I have appreciated Stephanie's careful attention to detail as she has developed a submission process that is both efficient and effective. I have also appreciated her willingness to make the development of the OTM process a group effort, inviting other Executive Board members to provide suggestions and feedback.

Most notably, the excitement and interest in the OTM process has been re-ignited on Western's campus and the number of submissions NRHH receives has increased significantly. It is, in fact, exciting to see students take pride in their efforts, and more importantly, to take pause to recognize and celebrate the contributions of another in such a positive fashion. Stephanie has been a strong influence in this change.

Stephanie's efforts with NRHH are not limited to the OTM process. She has often volunteered for additional committee work and participated in NRHH-sponsored programs and events. She has kept a positive attitude about her responsibilities and has been a source of support for fellow Executive Board members. Stephanie has been both an academic and professional role model. I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Stephanie Van Beek in the bid for NRHH Member of the Year.

Sincerely,



Ronna J. Biggs
Coordinator for Programming & Leadership Development
Advisor – Western Washington University NRHH Chapter