Faculty Job Descriptions

2020 Edition

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**Introduction**

SSP is much more than a job, it is an immersive community governed by a Code of Honor and led by a cohesive faculty team. It can be “the experience of a lifetime” to the participants and to you too. Please open your heart and mind as you:

- become familiar with the curriculum, traditions, and policies of the Summer Science Program, as described in the documents *SSP Values and Traditions, Faculty Handbook*, and *Participant Handbook*.
- teach, inspire, motivate, support, and watch over our gifted teenage participants;
- join the group for most lunches, dinners, guest lectures, and field trips;
- participate actively in meetings;
- support your colleagues in their own areas of responsibility, especially the Academic and Site Directors;
- practice respectful and inclusive interpersonal skills;
- take the initiative to prevent and resolve conflicts;
- do your best to make your SSP community one that is characterized by courtesy, trust, understanding, mutual respect, and sensitivity.

Before arrival, all faculty are required to read *SSP Values & Traditions* and *SSP Participant Handbook*, together comprising a detailed description of our unique design.
Campus Manager (CM)

SSP has a very distinctive culture, which is new to some faculty and to every participant. Written materials alone cannot enculturate them.

During the program, many problems large and small require resolution in real time. While the Academic and Site Directors handle the routine issues, they need recourse to and advice from a “higher authority” for the more challenging ones. Sometimes they require guidance or redirection.

The Campus Manager role combines administrator, supervisor, troubleshooter, and mediator. S/he represents the nonprofit organization to a program. The CM will explain, model, and enforce SSP values, traditions, policies, and procedures as described in the Values & Traditions booklet. S/he makes sure the participants experience SSP and not something else.

All of that requires keen observation and listening skills, maturity, discretion, judgment, diplomacy, and enough face time on campus to get to know the faculty – typically two trips, of about 7 days and 5 days, at the beginning and the middle of each program.

Each CM manages one or two programs and reports to the Executive Director.

Before faculty arrival on campus

- In consultation with ED and faculty, arrange for logistics such as campus housing and other facilities arrangements, guest lecture schedule and logistics, bus service, field trip scheduling, supplies, consulting nurse, etc.
- Attend spring faculty meeting and campus telecon(s).

Before participant arrival (campus startup)

- train faculty on SSP culture and policies during a series of meetings, pre-arrival and during startup;
- assist faculty with various preparations
- organize the startup faculty dinner

During program operation

- on Arrival Day, welcome participants and perform a symbolic handoff to the faculty;
- on Open House Day, act as emcee for College Roundtable and dinner program;
- monitor faculty message traffic, talk to AD and SD by phone at least weekly;
- help the faculty get the services they need from the host campus and outside vendors;
- at about the halfway point, interview each faculty member individually in person;
- intervene when necessary to resolve disputes and manage conflicts between faculty;
- advise and support the faculty in dealing with participant issues.
Academic Director (AD)

The Academic Director has authority over, and responsibility for, all academic aspects of the campus, delegating tasks to the Associate AD and TAs as appropriate. The AD reports to the Executive Director.

Before faculty arrival on campus

- attend a weekend spring faculty meeting;
- plan one or more collaborative inter-program projects with counterpart AD(s);
- plan faculty training on the research project, including equipment and software;
- create (and later maintain) the academic components of the master campus schedule, including lectures, research team meetings, homework due dates, etc.;
- conduct a pre-arrival planning teleconference with other program faculty.

Before participant arrival (campus startup)

- Manage AAD and TA training on the research project.

During program operation

- Oversee the progress of each team's research;
- deliver about half of the lectures; assign homeworks and provide solution keys to TAs;
- lead academic portion of weekly faculty meeting;
- meet one-on-one with AAD weekly, and with each TA at least every other week;
- meet with the Site Director at least weekly to discuss participant life and scheduling issues, and to resolve any academic integrity issues;
- Ensure that data are submitted to the appropriate archive, preferably by the teams themselves.

After participant departure

- Lead the academic portion of the final faculty meeting;
- Supervise shutdown, especially regarding equipment storage;

After faculty departure

- Within a month after departure, submit a report summarizing the academic aspects of the program, and related recommendations for next summer.
Site Director (SD)

The Site Director has authority over, and responsibility for, all non-academic aspects of the campus, including participant health and behavior, on-site administrative tasks, coordination of special events and field trips, and interface with host campus personnel. The Site Director reports to the Executive Director.

While all faculty are expected to participate actively in mentoring and supervising participants, the SD has primary authority and responsibility to maintain a positive, constructive social atmosphere and satisfactory residential experience for participants and faculty. The SD will accomplish these goals both directly (working with participants) and indirectly (managing other faculty in their residential duties).

While it is the Site Director’s responsibility to see that these tasks are completed, the SD may delegate many of them to TAs.

Before faculty arrival
- Attend a weekend spring faculty meeting and one or two pre-arrival teleconferences.
- Plan TA training on their residential life responsibilities.
- Create (and later maintain) the non-academic components of the master campus schedule, such as field trips, dorm meetings, guest lectures, birthday parties, etc.
- Plan res-life orientations for faculty and participants.

Before participant arrival
- Review applications and enrollment forms, including medical and personality forms. Communicate highlights to other faculty and the nurse.
- Ensure that the medical information and release forms are accessible when needed to faculty and nurse, including on field trips.
- Assist Campus Manager to train other faculty on residential life issues.
- Manage non-academic pre-arrival tasks such as selecting roommates, briefing nurse on medical issues, preparing participant chore chart, acquiring supplies, etc. Delegate tasks to TAs as appropriate.
- Share relevant parts of the schedule to campus dining and transportation people.
- Plan Arrival Day, including check-in, airport transportation, and “mug shot” photos.

During program operation
- Organize TA-led dorm meetings.
- Be “on call” to handle medical emergencies, acute behavior issues, etc.
- Maintain control over program credit card. Collect all receipts.
- Keep the CM updated regularly by phone and/or email.
- Manage participant health problems (physical or emotional) in consultation with parents and the on-call nurse.
• Plan special events such as guest speaker receptions, birthday parties, Open House Day, Closing Exercises.

• Coordinate planning for field trips (about two per week): bus, meals, re-confirming with destination, etc. Join the group for all field trips unless excused by CM or ED.

• Manage participant behavior. Counsel participants and/or call parents in consultation with CM. Talk with each participant at least twice.

• Work with host campus staff in resolving facility-related problems (e.g. dorm, security, dining, common areas, other residents, etc.).

• Lead the daily and weekly faculty meetings regarding residential life issues.

• Meet with the Academic Director at least weekly.

**Around Participant Departure**

• Administer participant exit surveys, per instructions from Executive Director, or delegate to TAs.

• Manage Departure Day including dorm cleanup, Closing Exercises, airport transportation, etc.

• Manage inventory and packing of SSP-owned equipment and supplies.

• Provide to the ED by appropriate means:
  o Campus debit or credit cards and receipts
  o High-res jogs of the best formal group photos and videos (serious and goofy poses), and any other photos which might be useful for the website and/or newsletter.
  o An inventory of remaining SSP-logo gifts.
  o List of supplies or equipment that should be purchased before arrival next summer.

**After Departure**

Within two weeks after departure, submit a report to the ED summarizing the non-academic aspects of the program, and recommendations for next summer:

• Recommendations for admissions changes related to health and behavior

• Notes on participant health issues that arose

• Notes on participant behavior issues

• Recommendations for changes to rules or policies

• Evaluation of the field trips

• Evaluation of the nurse

• Evaluation of the TAs in their res-life capacities

• Recommendations for changes to TA training or supervision on res-life matters

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**Associate Academic Director (AAD)**

The Associate Academic Director is responsible for roughly half of the classroom and lab activities, as assigned by the Academic Director according to respective skills and interests. The AAD's direct supervisor is the Academic Director.

The AAD is expected to:

- Become familiar with the curriculum, traditions, and policies of the Summer Science Program, as described in the documents SSP Values and Traditions, Faculty Handbook, and Participant Handbook.
- Attend a weekend spring faculty meeting in person, and one or more pre-arrival teleconferences.
- Deliver about half of the lectures, and assign appropriate homework, in consultation with the Academic Director.
- Join the group for most lunches, dinners, guest lectures, and field trips.
- Assist with components of the research project as assigned by the AD.
- Assist the AD in training, supervising, and evaluating TAs.
Lab Assistant

A Lab Assistant follows the instructions of the Academic and Associate Academic Directors, supporting assigned aspects of the lab activities and experiments. Typical duties will vary by project and campus, but will likely include:

- preparing equipment and reagents
- testing and documenting experimental procedures
- protecting participants from injury by training them in proper, safe lab procedures, and recognizing and neutralizing risks and hazards
- maintaining, protecting, and troubleshooting problems with equipment
- assisting participant teams in data collection, processing, and analysis

Lab Assistants are paid hourly, so must keep accurate time records, and submit those weekly to the Academic Director for verification and payroll.
Teaching Assistant and Residential Mentor (TA)

Most people are familiar with what a Teaching Assistant does in college classes. The job at SSP is much more complex, time-consuming, and hopefully, also more rewarding. Our TAs teach, mentor, and supervise participants in a residential setting, reporting to the Academic Director for academic matters, and the Site Director for residential matters.

SSP’s mission is much broader than merely teaching academic material -- it is to accelerate the development of highly gifted participants at a crucial turning point in their lives. Correspondingly, the primary goal of each TA is to help participants successfully navigate this intense, stressful, transformative experience. Each participant will need a different kind and level of help.

TAs are expected to get to know the participants as individuals, act as mentors and role models, help them with academic and personal problems, and encourage them, by words and deeds, to internalize the Code of Honor and Code of Conduct. TAs are members of a faculty, professionals in a workplace. As a TA you are constantly walking the fine line between authority figure and trusted confidant. It is vitally important that you be both. A long line of psychological research indicates that high achieving and highly satisfied participants are most likely to be found in classrooms and homes in which teachers and parents exhibit great warmth and friendliness combined with very high expectations for the achievement and behavior of participants.

See SSP Values & Traditions for more on these topics.

As a TA, you will hone the combination of people skills and technical skills required of leaders in every profession. You will earn:

- teaching experience, both in small group and classroom settings
- experience mentoring, supervising, and managing diverse individuals through a difficult challenge
- experience working within a team of three other TAs in an intense environment
- the respect of the participants, who know that you are always “there for them”
- the respect of your colleagues and supervisors

For example: if you ever apply for an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, you will see that half of the Merit Review criterion is based on “Broader Impacts.” Being a TA at SSP is a perfect example of a Broader Impacts activity!

TAs generally do not attend lecture with participants. During those hours they either perform tasks assigned by Directors, or take some personal time to relax, go into town, catch up on email, etc. Most evenings, TAs are expected to make themselves helpfully available (i.e. easy for participants and Directors to find): in the TA office, lab, dorm, soccer field, or wherever else participants may be gathered.

SSP is an unusually intense experience for faculty and participants alike. In the past, some have accepted the job with unrealistic expectations, such as regular hours or weekends off. SSP has been compared to a research submarine on a six-week mission under the polar ice cap ... 43 people working very hard in close quarters, largely out of touch with the rest of the world. If that thought makes you uncomfortable -- if you want to maintain your usual routine, or if you need a lot of personal “space”, or if you would have trouble telling a
teenager “please stop doing that” or communicating a Site Director’s decision with which you disagree -- you should probably consider another summer opportunity. But for those who embrace the opportunity to change young lives, it can be extremely rewarding.

Guaranteed: participants will imitate their TAs. If you model hard work, positivity, inclusivity, tolerance, they will too – and conversely.

Before faculty arrival

- Become familiar with the curriculum, traditions, and policies of the Summer Science Program, as described in the documents SSP Values and Traditions, Faculty Handbook, and Participant Handbook.
- Attend one or two pre-arrival teleconferences.
- Read materials as assigned by the AD and/or SD.

Before participant arrival

- Review participant applications and enrollment documents to learn participants’ strengths, weaknesses, personalities, and roommate preferences.
- Learn the equipment and software. Practice until you are able to teach and supervise participants on the procedures.
- Help prepare for Arrival Day, including icebreaker exercises.

During the program

Between the end of afternoon lecture and midnight or so, most TAs are expected to be with participants most of the time. So stock the TA office with your favorite snacks, bring something to do or read, and get comfortable in there. Participants need the reassurance that TAs are available. When a deadline is approaching, this is extra important. Discrete tasks include:

- If you wish to be absent for a guest lecture, field trip, lunch, or dinner, ask the SD for advance permission.
- Assist participants with homework and research.
- Monitor participant behaviors and attitudes. Correct them as necessary, especially when health or safety are at risk. Report to the SD anything potentially problematic.
- Assist the Directors with assigned tasks, for example: correct and return homework in a timely manner, run errands, etc.
- Participate in faculty meetings.
- Help organize games and other recreational activities.
- Optionally, give a lecture on a subject of personal interest and expertise.

After participant departure

- Participate in a final faculty meeting to evaluate each participant.
- Complete an exit survey.