

My Experience as a Student at SCAD (NOT Proofread or Polished idc, yall dont read anyways.)

By Matthew A. Michelangelo

Hi everyone,

I want to share my experience as a student at SCAD, both to document it and to highlight some systemic issues I endured. I'm writing this from my own perspective, using verifiable facts. I have removed the names of staff and students for privacy and legal safety. I dont want anyone targeted by ICE...after COVID's initial shutdown in March 2020. I withdrew from WVU, where I was double-majoring in Psychology and the Music Industry. On my transcripts, it says biology. I switched to BIO after a boy I like convinced me I'd be nothing with a psychology and music degree. Then COVID happened, and I left.

I was accepted to SCAD for the Winter Quarter 2021, to Oglethorpe House 603, when SCAD reopened at 33% capacity. During that winter quarter, I earned a 4.0 and learned all I could about SCAD in a little under a month so I could apply for a Resident Assistant position at SCAD. I was hired and assigned to Apiary and Bumble at the Hive 3rd floor, room 308, on March 10, 2021. From there, I work hard to give my residents an experience I didn't have in my first year of college. I went from an overall three on my evaluation for the fall quarter of 2021. My direct boss, Jasmine Collins, stated that after one quarter of working with me,

“Matt is a great RA, and most of his 3's are really close to being 4's. Matt has a great attitude and remains positive in most situations. Matt is very attentive to his floor and has made a few changes to his programs based on what he has learned about his residents' interests. Matt is also great at communicating and keeping Grace Duncan and me informed about what is going on on his floor. Matt is always willing to help out and go the extra mile for our staff. He has helped several members with policy violations, holding the phone, and the general willingness to be there for others.”

This was all the confirmation I needed that I had found my place and was doing what I was meant to do: creating and helping others. My last evaluation of that year included both winter and spring quarters. My overall rating of three was a unanimous four, with fives sprinkled in.

“Matt is a great RA that always has a positive attitude and truly wants to support the staff and community. Matt has always been a team player, assisting our staff with policy enforcement, doing extra work on large-scale projects, and having

some of the random items they may need. Also, he does great check-ins with his residents, including one where they were either given a positive affirmation or created one of their own. He is considering becoming a CA after this next year. And I can really see that as a possibility. With his dedication to his floor, organizational skills, and his habit of stepping in where help is needed, Matt would be an incredible leader for a staff. Matt is great at communication. I always feel like I know what is going on his floor and with him during our one-on-ones. He truly does care for his residents and wants the best for them. He shows his support for the staff by going to their programs and always being available if there's a problem."

The areas of growth and improvement were short and clear.

"Since Matt will be returning to staff at the Hive, and wants to be a CA, an area to focus on and improve on is his leadership. He should focus on mentoring new Ras and learning more about the role of a CA. Another item to improve is working on separating his professional life and personal emotions from situations with coworkers."

The coworker bit was about a staff member who created a lot of problems, not just for me, but for a lot of other RAs, Ell Pikor. I had a problem with the lies, with the half-sided stories, not only to others but with random facts. I really disliked them spreading general misinformation, a good example was them telling a group and me of our peers that.

"I can't fuck with Lana del Rey cause she's transphobic."

to which I said

"what? How?"

I've been a fan of Lana since Video Games on Tumblr. This staff member proceeded to say

"She keeps misgendering her trans son and calling them by their dead name."

to which I said quite flatly after many instances of them lying,

"Lana doesn't have kids... what are you even talking about?"

It ranged from lying about being Red green colored blind to then Blue green color blind, to them dropping comments that a coworker "having beautiful red hair (it was dyed red, bright red), and that the strawberries at Trader Joe's were so "big and

red” to them, lying about me calling our CA, Grace Duncan, a bunch of names after Them and another co worker saing “help” in the chat. They never answered, so I ran to the door after the chat was freaking out. It was all a joke by that coworker, Ell Pikor, because they couldnt tell is a color was “blue or grey.” It was slate blue; who cares that doesn't prove color blindness?

I let them vent after the staff scolded them. But it was turned on me, It was reported that I was “shit talking” our CA, Grace Duncan, right before my one on one with that named CA, Julia, a other coworker with them was caught in the crossfire and had to be the referee in this “investigation” at the end of the year after a irating struggle to get them to leave me alone we were hired to stay on Apiary and Bumble for the 2022-2023 academic year. They were ultimately moved to Colony and Dance by both my resident Director and the Director of Residence Life and housing. I stayed for the summer to be a summer RA, and it was great. I got to bond with the new RDs, Melisa Majdancic, a former SCAD alum who just graduated that spring, and meet my new CA, Grace Marcy.

I kept the flyer she handed out at the previous RA banquet for a book she wrote for her MFA and decided to buy it so I could read it, get to know her, and make her feel welcome on the new staff, since she hasn't worked with any of us. She was primarily at Turner House. We had excellent talks when she got here, and I was able to answer all her questions about how Apiary and Bumble function. We talked about her poems, and she said she'd sign it for me. I told her

“Bet. But after winter break! I want you to mean what you write.”

From there, I took my areas for improvement to heart. I naturally took a group of new Ras under my wing, provided them with all the resources I had collected over the last year, and sat with them late after training to answer any questions. I'm happy to say that three of them became CAs on their own volition; they did the work, and I just provided the tools and instructions. This RD and I had a great work relationship. My fall evaluation from her was overall a four. I achieved seven ratings of 5. Her comments consisted of:

“Matt continues to go above and beyond on many levels of the RA role. He maintains great communication skills as well as a steadfast approach to taking initiative. He facilitates great relationships with both residents and other student staff and professional staff, while maintaining an optimistic attitude. Matt's actions all throughout the quarter have shown me he is reliable, cares for fellow team members, and is willing to put extra effort into every interaction. Matt excels at communicating both as a staff member and as an RA to his residents. Throughout the quarter, Matt has

had to deal with many roommate conflicts and mediations. He handles these situations with a level head and does well in de-escalating chaos. For residents who have gone through mediations in the quarter, Matt takes the extra step of checking in on the residents for the remainder of the quarter to ensure that the issues have been worked on, improved, or require further follow-up. Another area in which Matt excels is mentorship. There are multiple new RAs on the Apiary and Bumble staff, and Matt has helped in many instances. Whether it be to answer questions in the chat, offer to assist in crisis situations, or volunteer for additional work-related activities, Matt shows up and is ready to help anyone he can. His love for residence life and creating exceptional experiences for residents is shown in all that he does.

Opportunities for growth and improvement:

“Being that Matt is very kind, he tends to overextend himself in the role at times, taking on more responsibilities than most. *While this hasn't shown to be an issue in terms of quality or ability of work*, I would encourage Matt to take more time for himself and his self-care.”

This was given to me on February 21, 2023, and completed by my RD on January 10th, 2023. The winter quarter that year was awful. The worst I've faced at SCAD by far. The Director of ResLife, Jason Rigsbee, was reportedly fired. Although not officially confirmed, all the RDs said he was told to quit or be fired. My RD even mentions in the Hive RA office that his daughter was just accepted here or already applied. I do not know why this happened. All I know is that the current Reslife Pro staff did not highly anticipate the New director, Kalima Harris [KA-Lee-ma], nor was the new Dean of Students, Dr. Amiee Ryann Bellmore. It felt heavy that winter training, and for the first two weeks at the beginning of winter, like the air when a severe storm is imminent... I remember asking my old RD from 2021-2022, who was now the assistant director of first-year areas, Jasmine Collins, whether these new directors from Beewell were a good thing. I remember the hesitation, I remember the pause, feeling like the real answer. She assured me it would probably be fine, saying,

“They are from counseling, how bad could it be?”

Well, shit... famous last words in art. I guess Lana was right. Life does imitate art. My roommate at the time, Hunter Matthew Villano, and I were getting really close. It

started off rough. The day he moved in, he didn't say a word. His dad actually spoke the most, which surprised me, given who my father and stepfather were. His dad appeared nice, open, and friendly. He wasn't helping with the unpacking, I noted. I need to mention because it always bothered me. One of the first things Mr. Chris Villamon said to me was

"You read tarot?" I did, my door was shut, not latched, and on my private bedroom wall was a tapestry that said, Psychic readings, on my desk were tarot cards. Obviously he opened my door and looked. I didn't have anything to hide, but it was suspicious, I remember, and threw me for a loop.

Moving on, I came back from a double shift, checking in on the RAs moving in since a summer staff coworker had to be at CA training. At least I got to meet my new staff! And I got to meet my roommate— Hunter Vilano, additional context: he and I lived on the 6th floor of Oglethorpe House in the winter of 2021. He was also a transfer student. We didn't speak, hardly anyone did that year, because you know... covid, fall of 2022, him and I actually had office hours 7-9 pm. He was on Colony and Dance, and I was Apiary and bumble. I remember him being quiet and awkward. Something I knew when I felt out of my element. So I tried to talk to him a lot. It was a long two hours without him speaking. I began to dislike working with him; he was very cold and apathetic toward issues in the office, but we were still brand-new RAs.

This is where I will confess, I texted my best friend from high school, who now lives in Virginia that

"The RA I'm working with is actually kinda cute."

I proceeded to follow that up with:

"he's pissing me off tho, though. He doesn't answer my questions [general office questions]. I don't think he knows either, but goddamn, say something don't just stare at me."

MISC CONTEXT: I cleaned his whole room, I mopped the floor, I sanitized the desks, and furniture and vacuumed, I also did it for the whole dorm, his room included, before he got there, not because I was ever going to tell him or hold it against him I just thought about how I would feel if I knew someone moved in early and left everything dusty BUT "my" room. I also liked him (not entirely based on attraction, though, after a while; that developed again), and I enjoyed his presence when we worked together. It was... *Comfortable*,

I talked with Mr. Villano about tarot, my cleanliness, and Nostradamus. His dad mentioned they got tarot readings down at the fair and talked about metaphysics. I remember being pleasantly surprised that this man with a catholic necklace was talking about tarot, Nostradamus, and spiritual things. His father asked for my number, "just in case anything happens." I also remember noting that I gave it to him, and then my roommate asked for my number. The mother still didn't acknowledge me, which was fine, to be honest, she kind of scared me, she didn't look approachable, but neither do I, so who's to judge? The mother did scold the dad and told him to:

"Stop talking my ear off."

He was a bit, but it was endearing. I left to go get food from the café, and when I was walking back to Apiary, they were leaving. I asked if they were heading out. The father, again, was the only one to speak. He said yes and that my roommate, their son, Hunter. Would be back tomorrow, and I remember the last thing his dad ever said to me in person,

"Hopefully Hunter doesn't give you too much trouble."

At this point in hindsight, I'm convinced I'm not living in a situation, but living in either a very good lifetime movie (rare) or the most dramatic TV series ever created because that foreshadowing might as well have stuck me dead right then and there.

That training was tough. A few returning Ras were very good friends with that RA who was moved for causing problems. I was a bit anxious; I always am in new situations. And then I got COVID... for the first time ever. Not only that, but I accidentally tested too early, and it said negative, until I got really sick and tested positive. At this point, the SCAD was eliminating contact tracing for covid so they weren't helpful. I was told to stay in my room for 5 days and then wear a mask. I gave it to a handful of other RAs and Cas, if you will. I remember the shame being burned into me in that moment after finding out about that. I apologized in the staff chat and genuinely cried to sleep that night. another omen. The next morning, I woke up feeling stupid. My roommate was excused from training, too, but I was happy he confirmed he didn't get it. A month after move-in, the most he said was "hey."

I was worried I did something wrong, but I was determined to make him like me because I like him, and roommate talk at least right? I still had a lot to work on within myself. I found myself fawning over him; his aloofness was both driving me crazy and making me love the familiarity of the way everyman in my life had acted towards me. I mistook it for the start of a crush. I was able to forget about it for a long time, but I was still upset that I was doing all the work for him, and he still wasn't talking to me.

Bro, be so for real. For me, the boiling point in the fall quarter was when a hurricane scare happened; he told me he wouldn't be back that night, which was irritating. I was now the sole RA the night of a hurricane with 64 freshmen. But when it was chilling out, I was pooped. My two friends came over: Liam and Faith, both on staff. One was a new RA, and the other was my old Roommate from last year. I was livid because my CA, Grace Marcy, told me that day he actually evacuated to his girlfriend's place in Birmingham, Alabama. (6 hours away.) I texted him asking if he evacuated, and he said "no" that he went to his girlfriend's place in Birmingham... is it crispy? Right. Right.

I was irate. I wasn't mad that he had a girlfriend— that he never mentioned- I was about bummed, but oh well. I was mad that he was being so avoidant for no reason. I vented to my friends, they saw my face when I saw his message, they knew he was putting all his work on me, and I admitted I took it on as well and didn't tell him no, and to be honest I would do it all over again, We had a good night (we didn't just vent about him) the new RA lost in the moment walked into his room. The door was always shut. I hadn't seen it since he was moving in. I peered as I got up and scolded her, she was laughing that he had a crucifix above his door, she was also catholic for context and joked that

"That's why he won't talk to you, it's because you're gay."

She was joking. I knew this. She said she was joking. And then she kept joking about it. I didn't tell her to stop, I let it get under my skin, I pushed it down... inadvertently planting the seed that he hated me for being gay. As fall proceeded, I let go of that trauma response crush, and we started talking more. His girlfriend visited about 3 times. I don't remember her name, I don't remember her face, I remember nothing about her other than the vilest energy I've felt in a long time, all directed at me. After the second time she visited, I finally asked my roommate, who has been talking to me a lot more,

"Does she not like me? its strange she walks in and won't make eye contact or acknowledge me, or is she just like that?"

I don't remember exactly what he said; it was something about her being reserved and shy around people she doesn't know. I did tell my Hunter that they did hurt my feelings the first night she visited weeks ago. I walked to my personal room door, and I heard them come in. So I came to the door threshold and said hi, and they both ignored me. For context, I had a candy cart at the door for anyone who wanted it, and I

made sure to have sour candy in case a resident was anxious. Hunter put some stickers from a program he had in there.

I told him that I was so hurt and upset that I honestly wanted to throw his stick in his room. An over exaggeration, I think if I ever did that, I would immediately pick them up and fret about it forever. Kinda how I imagine someone would hold onto killing someone in an accidental hit and run. I wish I was being hyperbolic; I hate people hating me, I actively do anything I can to avoid it, which then makes people hate me more somehow, I would love in a perfect world we could say to someone hurt us how they did and either sort it out or new keep talking about never speak about them again. But this sent a perfect world. * **Note this section for later**

The third and final time she [Hunters Girlfrined] visited before the winter quarter, she must've been in a worse mood than the last two times. She was talking to my roommate, her boyfriend, so mean that he offered help with something on Photoshop, a genuine offer for someone he was dating. Her response,

“What can you do that I can't.” It was a statement, not a question.

Sure, I couldn't see her or him. I was in the living room working on my first poetry collection, *Memoirs of You*, that I've been working on here and there since my sophomore year at WVU. They were in his room. The sofa was right next to his door. My hypervigilance was in overdrive with her. The way she carried herself, the cadence of her responses made me a scared kid again. When they were leaving for the night to go take photos around savannah I believe she begrudgingly walked out of his room and said hi to me, I stop typing and stood up to shake her hand, I made eye contact and the look of annoyance made me block out anything being said, I know I was talking, I know I was responding but I was gone.

We didn't speak about her again; he never mentioned her. If he did, it was “my girlfriend,” never her name, which my friend, the new RA, did. Faith, thought was beyond strange. Actually alot of people noted it to be strange, Julia, Liam, Faith, Vicky, Julieanne Tati. To be honest, it started to feel like he was desperately trying to convince everyone she was real... SHE IS, I had the misfortune of meeting her.

I digress, the three of us, Faith, Hunter, me, and him, became a comfortable trio to my perception, we got so close I told both of them that I wanted to get them Christmas gifts, and that I don't expect anything back, that I just valued them. My roommate, without arguing, which I expected him to do, just said what “the budget” I told him that I don't care about reciprocity with this gift, that I don't expect anything back. He

argued then, and I told him to give one of his photos from his photography collection. He asked which one? I told him "Which ever one is your favorite" and then before he was going to leave for for winter break I was able to get him to come to dinner with my mom and sister, who also gose to SCAD he came not arguments, he was awkward, I was awkward my family like to joke that I'm crazy, they made jokes like "are you as psycho as matt as an RA?" a joke on the surface, the deeper story was of me as a scapegoat in a dysfunctional family, his dad asked my mom for a photo of him which she snuck and took, I say that to emphasize how comfortable our parents got.

After dinner, I helped him pack his car, and we left for a break. SCAD's winter break is from a few days before Thanksgiving to after the New Year. I went home to Pennsylvania, to a house I hate, full of memories that haunt me in my sleep to this day. No one texted back really, I didn't blame them, everyone was busy, my roommate got an internship with a rent house in Birmingham. He spent the break with his girlfriend.

So, it didn't surprise me that he wouldn't answer. It was unusual at this point, but I figured he just reverted to his icy ways. One conversation was dragged out from a little bit after Thanksgiving to December 29. His dad texted me a lot, and his dad texted my mom a lot, too. It was strangely nice. His dad is what I wish my dad and stepdad were like. My mom didn't tell me much about what they talked about when we were all good. Since she's exported all their texts, I still haven't read much of them four years later. Maybe only 10%

Coming back from brake I put his gift on the coffee table with a card I wrote him, I'm terrified of messing up hand written messages to people, thanks to teachers scrutinizing me in front of class for not knowing how to spell, a combination of a poor district, poor socioeconomic status, and ADHA and dyslexia that no teacher cared to check for. I put my messages into Grammarly and then copied them onto the paper. I kept a draft I'd written, but I missed something and didn't catch it, so I wrote a new one. I haven't looked at it till now. I wrote

"[REDACTED]" No one actually cares, so why share it?

When I got to ALT, my role involved house and event management for SCADShow. During this time, I encountered challenges that I reported to staff multiple times, including peer harassment and inadequate onboarding. I've tried to report it to OCR, the CIA, the FBI, but with the current admission, I cannot bear the thought that they may be targeted by ICE. Puala S. Wallace even has a child from China, while she

was raised in the States. I dont even want the government to go after her kid. So I'm at a stalemate. Now The General Counsel emailed me saying people are allowed to look at your public account if you tag them, and that I have an "unprofessional tone." Well... it was professional at one point. Also, I only tag them AFTER they stalked me, so they know I see them, I have proof and timestamps of that dipshit.

I do this to show them I see them. I've documented this thought, SCAD isn't really that attentive. SCAD likes to twist narratives, as if I were rude from the start. I wasn't the emails. It's all been sent out. Whether or not anyone does anything is up to them. I hope they do the right things. No one listened to me.

Timeline & Key Points:

- I began my role at SCADShow in the late winter quarter of 2025, starting on March 24th in Atlanta after spring break. Despite being hired on the spot Feb 19th over Zoom, I was not formally introduced to several peers until weeks later. Lack of onboarding created confusion and contributed to workplace conflict.
- I reported concerns about bullying and harassment to my supervisors on multiple occasions. These reports were not meaningfully addressed and were brushed off.
- In May 2025, I met with my supervisor and another staff member to discuss whether I should continue in my role. At the meeting, I was given a "reflection period" and told I could take a short break before deciding. Charese and Ruden agreed it would be the start of the summer quarter, June 16th. I did not submit a resignation and requested a follow-up at the start of the summer quarter.
- I communicated my intent to continue after thinking it through and trusting they would fix it so I could just work. I didn't even like the student staff at this point. I didn't want them to be my friends; I just wanted to do my job and not be bullied over campus for existing. but was later informed that my position was considered "vacated" and terminated. This occurred despite my not having submitted a formal resignation.

Systemic Issues:

- A lack of clear onboarding and training set me up to fail despite my efforts.
- Repeated reports of harassment were not adequately addressed.
- Confidentiality concerns arose when previous reports I made were shared internally without my consent.
- Communication about student employment policies, reflection periods, and expectations was inconsistent and confusing, causing financial and academic stress.

These issues resulted in:

- Financial hardship, including difficulty covering rent and basic necessities. Like bathing and medication for my diabetes. I'm homeless now, trying my best to get back on my feet. Thought SCAD is just as persistent as I am. [edit I have gotten an appointment as of Jan 29th! No where is hiring still Ive sent 128+ applications]
- Emotional and mental health strain, including anxiety related to workplace conflict. I've tried to kill myself so many times that it just won't happen. I think I'm blessed to keep living cured to endure this bullshit.
- Stress is affecting my academic performance and professional opportunities. I've lost job opportunities, even though I've been public about all this. I've reported that to SCAD too for years.

Context:

I have ADHD and autism, which affect how I communicate and interact. I do not think it's a problem. It's 100% not a crutch nor an excuse. If I say something wrong, I will apologize and give context. If you don't like it, idgaf. My goal is to optimize understanding so that both parties know why it happened, thereby allowing the pathway to crystallize stronger in the brain. Some of the conflicts I experienced stemmed from misunderstandings about how I process information and respond in social/work situations. I've asked for a mediator with communication, though, as you can see in my evals, it's NEVER been a problem when SCAD liked me. With structured guidance and empathetic communication, many of these issues could have been prevented or minimized.

I hope this encourages institutions to:

- Improve onboarding and training for student workers.
- Respond promptly and effectively to reports of harassment.
- Provide clear communication around employment policies and expectations.
- Consider neurodiversity in workplace interactions to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts.

I'm sharing this to document my experience and advocate for better support for students. My goal is to raise awareness about systemic gaps, not to defame individuals. I encourage anyone facing similar issues to document their experiences carefully and seek confidential guidance from advocacy or legal resources if needed.