

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

VISTA Member Job Title: Rollins College VISTA Outreach Coordinator & Advocate for Student Veterans

Sponsoring Organization: University of Central Florida

Project Name: OSI AmeriCorps VISTA Project

Project Number: 3425872

Project Period: February 24, 2017-February 23, 2018

Subsite Name (if applicable): Rollins College

Subsite Supervisor: Penelope Strater, Director of Student & Family Care
1000 Holt Avenue – 2771, Winter Park, FL 32789

Supervision responsibilities estimated at 10% of full-time effort

Focus Area(s)

Primary: Veterans and Military Families

Secondary: Education

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project: The primary goal of this project is to enhance the success, persistence, and care of Rollins students who are military veterans. The VISTA will work to address the growing needs of the student veteran population through a variety of interventions, referrals, and capacity building services designed to assist student veterans in achieving their academic goals, promote social integration, and connect to student success resources (such as financial aid and student employment). Rollins does not currently offer coordinated support services specifically geared toward student veterans. Currently, there are 60 student veterans enrolled at the college.

The primary goal of this veterans' project is to enhance the success, persistence, and care of Rollins students who are military veterans. The VISTA will work to address the growing needs of the student veteran population through a variety of interventions, referrals, and capacity building services designed to assist student veterans in achieving their academic goals, promote social integration, and connect to student success resources such as financial aid and student employment in addition to affordable housing and health care. Rollins does not currently offer coordinated support services specifically geared toward student veterans and therefore, the VISTA member will primarily build capacity to help economically distressed vets with accessibility to resources on campus and in the community. Currently, there are 60 student veterans enrolled at the college. Veterans often have a range of student needs and concerns that are different from traditional students. The VISTA will serve as part of the Rollins Student & Family Care team within the Division of Student Affairs, allowing for coordination of care across campus resources and entities. This will include strategic coordination of outreach and resources among campus community partners to minimize issues and help student veterans navigate and succeed at Rollins. The VISTA will also serve as an advisor to the Rollins Student Veterans Association.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: Ongoing*):

Develop a new Rollins student veteran services support program to help increase student success.

Member Activities:

Step 1: The VISTA will create a framework based on identified higher education case management best practices that minimize barriers to student success for this population, using the U.S. Department of Education's "8 Keys to Veterans' Success" as a guide.

Step 2: The VISTA will develop resources and provide centralized coordination of outreach, engagement, and partnerships with academic, financial aid, and student affairs departments to best support student veteran needs.

Step 3: The VISTA will provide individualized student-centered outreach to identify Rollins student veteran needs in order to link students to appropriate campus resources.

Step 4: The VISTA will develop veteran-to-veteran peer mentoring opportunities.

Step 5: Through qualitative and quantitative methods, the VISTA will regularly assess the student veteran population, identify trends, and help clarify the needs of Rollins student veterans. The VISTA will also work to establish campus connections to enhance data collection methods for institutional research purposes in order to better track this cohort.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: Ongoing*):

Promote awareness of student veterans' needs, support services, and campus engagement opportunities to provide a more supportive environment for student veterans.

Member Activities:

Step 1: The VISTA will gain an understanding of and help identify and report on barriers for success for student veterans.

Step 2: The VISTA will develop and coordinate two annual workshop opportunities/campus events for faculty and staff to learn and deepen their understanding of the student veteran population.

Step 3: The VISTA will serve as an advisor to the College's Student Veterans Association to enhance social integration opportunities for student veterans, including campus leadership opportunities and College-sponsored clubs, organizations, activities, and events. The VISTA will provide monthly opportunities for student veterans to connect through social and service opportunities.

Step 4: The VISTA will collaborate with the Wellness team and Office of Disability Services to develop programming and outreach services focused on wellness and well-being specifically to serve the needs of student veterans.

Objective of the Assignment (*Period of Performance: Ongoing*):

Establish connections to resources offered by federal, state and local agencies, as well as college and grant funding and financial aid opportunities to further support the needs of student veterans.

Member Activities:

Step 1: The VISTA will meet with the Office of Financial Aid to gain knowledge of available scholarships, loans, and financial aid packages available to assist student veterans.

Step 2: The VISTA will meet regularly with the Rollins Center for Career & Life Planning to identify appropriate resources and gain knowledge of employment opportunities, internships, and career preparation services for student veterans.

Step 3: The VISTA will collaborate with local veteran services agencies, including the Orlando Veterans Administration (VA) and Heart of Florida United Way to offer additional community partnerships in support of the identified needs of student veterans, and to link students to appropriate resources and assistance as needed.

Step 4: The VISTA will compile and disseminate information on available campus and community resources and assistance opportunities for student veterans.

Step 5: The VISTA will help identify veterans eligible for the Yellow Ribbon program and participate in community events that promote educational opportunities for veterans.