

VISTA Assignment Description (VAD)

VISTA Member Job Title: Career Education and Exposure VISTA
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): Career Services, University of Central Florida
Focus Area(s) Primary: Economic Opportunity Secondary: Education

VISTA Assignment Objectives and Member Activities

Goal of the Project:

Career Services at the University of Central Florida contributes to the University's goal of student development by providing centralized, comprehensive, and coordinated career development, experiential learning, and employer relations programs. Through working in Career Services, the VISTA will create and expand projects related to AmeriCorps VISTA's overarching themes of economic opportunity and education.

The VISTA will: (1) Expand the Department's Workplace Exposure and Experience Programs to increase job shadowing opportunities for underrepresented students. (2) Centralize the posting of on-campus jobs to better connect low income, first generation students with employment. (3) Grow career programming that educates students on careers for the common good and connects underrepresented students with employment opportunities. (4) Create career development resources for underrepresented student populations.

These projects are linked to promoting economic opportunity for all students, and specifically for economically disadvantaged students. Increasing job shadowing opportunities will provide students with valuable workplace experience and exposure while increasing their employability skills. Centralizing on-campus job postings will especially benefit economically disadvantaged students in desperate need of work. Finally, creating career development materials for underrepresented student populations (ex. homeless students) will connect students to services/resources that promote career readiness and employability.

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

Expand the Externship Program by creating additional job shadowing opportunities for UCF students and by promoting the program to economically disadvantaged students. In 2015, 346 students completed job shadowing experiences, however more than 800 student registrants were not matched due to student demand greatly exceeding the number of job shadowing opportunities. The VISTA will implement new initiatives designed to narrow this gap, thereby providing more students with valuable workplace exposure and experience in an effort to increase student employability.

Member Activities:

Step 1: Broaden the Externship Program by creating on-campus job shadowing experiences for students. Design a strategic plan to recruit on-campus job shadow hosts, build partnerships with UCF units (Athletics, Student Health Services, etc.), and maintain communication with hosts to promote retention.

Step 2: Implement a new collaboration with the UCF Alumni Association centered on recruiting UCF alumni to host current students for short-term job shadowing experiences. Develop creative email marketing campaigns, reach out to alumni who express interest, and maintain communication with new alumni hosts to promote retention.

Step 3: Increase job shadow participation rates for economically disadvantaged UCF students. Identify economically disadvantaged students, promote the program, and find opportunities to continuously improve the program's orientation to effectively prepare these student for their job shadowing experiences.

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

Collaborate with key UCF departments to centralize the posting of on-campus jobs in order to better connect students with employment opportunities. While open to all students, the site will especially benefit economically disadvantaged and homeless students who are in need of work.

Step 1: Convene key stakeholders to discuss centralizing the posting of on-campus jobs. This includes identifying stakeholders, engaging the stakeholders in the planning process, and developing an implementation plan.

Step 2: Serve as the project manager, coordinating the creation of the centralized posting site through working with technical and non-technical staff. Ensure that the site will meet the needs of both on-campus jobs seekers and hiring managers.

Step 3: Lead a campaign to educate UCF departments on the importance and benefits associated with posting student worker jobs on the centralized site. This includes meeting with the largest on-campus employers to create buy in and reaching out to units not utilizing the centralized site to lend assistance.

Step 4: Promote the centralized site to UCF students, specifically to economically disadvantaged and homeless students in need of work.

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

Expand public service career programing for underserved and underrepresented populations and create new initiatives that: (1) Educate students about careers for the common good. (2) Connect students with volunteer, internship, and employment opportunities. Last year, these programs educated and connected more than 600 students with career and employment opportunities and involved more than 60 nonprofit and government organizations.

Member Activities:

Step 1: Plan one or more career showcase events that expand students' awareness of public service careers and connect students with internship and employment opportunities. Involve key campus partners in the planning process, coordinate employer registration, and expand sponsorship opportunities.

Step 2: Create and execute a variety of programs that educate students about careers for the common good and connect these students with career and employment opportunities. Programs may include, but are not limited to targeted workshops, panels, and career chats.

Step 3: Market public service career programming to low income students.

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

Create career development resources for underserved and underrepresented student populations. These populations may include, but are not limited to homeless students, economically disadvantaged students, and first generation students. The resources will address the specific career needs of these populations and connect students with services and resources that promote career readiness and employability.

Member Activities:

Step 1: Conduct a gap analysis through assessing current resources and determining which UCF population-specific career resources should be developed.

Step 2: Research the identified student populations to understand their unique career needs. Begin gathering content aligned with the respective populations' career needs through collaborating with career counselors, benchmarking population-specific career resources at other universities, and soliciting feedback from current students.

Step 3: Determine the best communication medium (handouts, brochures, webpages, etc.) and begin creating population-specific career readiness and employability content.

Step 4: Share the newly-created resources with their respective student populations. Educate faculty/staff on the availability of these resources.