

## **College Relations Division: *Community Relations RSAP***

The Community Relations Student Associates will work with the faculty and staff who lead research and outreach in a number of community-based initiatives, including

- partner schools in MCS (Central High School, Cypress Middle, Springdale Elementary and Snowden School)
- the Rhodes Hollywood Springdale Partnership
- related partnerships in local neighborhoods such as VECA and the Evergreen Historic District
- other community partnerships that College Relations develops.

Community Relations RSA's will gain significant experience in all aspects of maintaining community partnerships and programming, including program coordination, communication and evaluation. They will work with community partners along with program faculty, staff and with the many students who volunteer in school and community programming. The RSAs will report to the Director of Special Projects, with direct management of programs from the Learning Corridor Program Coordinator and the RHSP Project Manager.

The Community Relations RSA's will be mentored by project faculty and staff and neighborhood leaders, attend project team meetings, attend neighborhood meetings (e.g. of the business owners and local neighborhood associations) and contribute to all aspects of the Learning Corridor/RHSP programming. Students will receive training in various aspects of the project, such as the Memphis City Schools "Our Children, Our Future" training. The four Community Relations RSA's will be expected to work as a team to support and learn from one another's work.

### **Community Relations RSA responsibilities will include:**

- Coordinate the work of students across a number of program areas (for instance volunteers and students who work in the neighborhood as part of their course work). This will initially include developing this process, then documenting it for future Community Relations Student Associates.
- Recruit student volunteers for specific programmatic needs, for example programs to mentor young people in the neighborhood or to monitor the condition of housing and code violations.
- Coordinate and track the programs in which students work.
- Collecting, recording and analyzing data about program effectiveness for Learning Corridor and Rhodes Hollywood Springdale programs, in accordance with recently developed evaluation guidelines and continual improvement plans.
- Coordinating data collection and analysis with the Kinney Program, to ensure that College Relations is duplicating neither services nor programming, and in order to better track all activities related to partnerships with the schools.
- Working with stakeholders and the Learning Corridor committee to suggest potential areas for creating programs with the schools and in the neighborhood and implementing this programming.
- Organizing and participating in community events in the neighborhood, including opportunities to publicize and present about programs to the local community.
- Providing some degree of organizational support for Colleges Relations and for the neighborhood office, including keeping records of participants at meetings and events, being responsible for minutes at neighborhood meetings and keeping track of contact.
- Working to engage community members in LC programming.

- Training and supervising other students as necessary.

### **Benefits to Students:**

The hands-on nature of LC Student Associate position will afford opportunities to develop key academic, organizational, and leadership skills that will be invaluable to their career and/or post-college educational choices. In particular they will receive:

- Hands-on experience in the public school system, as well as exposure to a wide variety of organizations that partner with the schools and in the neighborhood.
- Development of organizational and leadership skills in recruiting and managing student volunteers.
- Regular contact with Rhodes faculty and staff who provide leadership in Learning Corridor programming.
- Organizational experience, including coordinating a large group of fellow students for work in partner schools.
- The LC RSA will benefit from the extensive community outreach that is central to LC and RHSP programming. Not only will they have opportunities to engage in community service, but also to network with professionals and community members in and outside the college in ways that will enhance their sense of community involvement and professional development.

### **Benefits to the Department:**

College Relations and the LC have a number of needs that these students will fill:

- Need to develop a process for institutionalizing volunteer opportunities for Rhodes students in the project.
- Need to coordinate students in a way to meet the needs of multiple programs.
- Meeting needs of partner neighborhood and schools, including providing mentors for students in the schools and in the neighborhood generally.
- Helping us to continue this beneficial program in the post-grant period.
- Need for student input about directions for LC programming.
- Need to institutionalize this project beyond the grant period by leveraging existing programs and resources at the college.
- Need to continually assess the success of our programming and make necessary adjustments.
- Need to coordinate various aspects of the outreach programs managed by our division.

### **Benefits to Rhodes:**

This position will enable us continue to develop a volunteer recruitment process managed by RSAs that can serve as a model for other departments and inter-departmental programs with an outreach component. The RSAs in this position will fully document these processes and share them with the RSAP committee and other college offices.

Additionally, this program supports all aspects of the Rhodes Vision, including student access (through our work with local high school students), learning, and engagement in the local community. Students in these positions will serve as ambassadors for Rhodes to the wider community.

*For additional information about this position, please contact Suzanne Bonefas, [bonefas@rhodes.edu](mailto:bonefas@rhodes.edu)*