Sample Internship Description (Fixed Tasks)

Field: "Internship Description"

Program Background

In 2012, our youth leaders applied their insight, experience and wisdom to the problem of low graduation and college rates. Identifying themselves as part of the solution, the youth initiated a program to address the critical information gap and shortage of counseling services, and provide support for entering high school students by tapping older students as peer educators and mentors. This program builds the capacity of schools to engage a cadre of older students to provide academic services to hundreds of their younger peers; helps create effective learning environments; and builds a culture of shared responsibility necessary for group success.

The program was launched at a local high school in 2013, where students, counselors, administrators and staff worked together to develop the program content and structure. The program has since expanded to four additional schools, and is on track to expand district-wide (to 18 high schools) pending a school board vote in the fall.

The program is built on a youth development approach that promotes meaningful engagement, improves relationships with adults and peers, cultivates a sense of responsibility for the broader student community, and develops leadership skills while specifically addressing the achievement gap that persists for low-income youth of color. It integrates innovative youth development curriculum, principles and practices into the school day and maximizes the number of youth who can exercise leadership in ways that directly improve academic success for their younger peers.

Internship Description

Under the guidance of the Director of Research the intern will create a study to examine the implementation of this program in three schools throughout the area. The research should address two broad objectives: (1) to understand the ways that the program affects the students, school personnel and schools involved; and (2) to study the implementation process, with a focus on varying school experiences in the context of different school environments. Using a mixed-method study that focuses on the three implementing schools, we will pose the following research questions.

1. What are the program implementation experiences?
2. To what extent does the program affect students?
3. To what extent does the program affect school personnel?
4. To what extent does the program affect school climate overall?
5. What are differences in program implementation experiences across sites?

Research Activities

1. Start-Up Activities: Review of Literature and Data Collection Materials
• Task 1.1: Meet with staff
• Task 1.2: Review existing literature
• Task 1.3: Review surveys and other data collection materials

2. Theory of Change Development
• Task 2.1: Under the guidance of the Director of Research, develop the shell of the Theory of Change based on existing materials and conversations with staff
• Task 2.2: Populate and complete the Theory of Change based on data gleaned from on-site implementation study activities, with input from the Director of Research

3. Data Collection
• Task 3.1: Research question development and refinement
• Task 3.2: Instrument and protocol development and refinement under the direction of the Director of Research
• Task 3.3: Institutional Review Board package preparation and submission
• Task 3.4: Data collection at various points during the school year

4. Data Analysis
• Task 4.1: Generate "codes" (themes) to examine qualitative data with the Director of Research
• Task 4.2: Code and analyze qualitative data
• Task 4.3: Analyze quantitative data (surveys)

5. Reporting and Dissemination
We anticipate that the study will culminate with a final report, including an executive summary. The intern will then present the landscape view of the findings to their manager and other stakeholders.

The intern will provide updates in their weekly meetings with their manager.

Field: "Impact"
The findings from this study will inform future decisions regarding program offerings that our organization will develop.