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Project Proposal
LIS 6409
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Career Academy Expansion

PROBLEM

Within our library system, we provide classes and programs to assist patrons seeking employment. However, the current framework is not enough to support patrons through the entire process- it requires patrons to have access to further resources to complete the full process of finding a job. My project will attempt to fill in the gaps to provide a more robust service that will help more people to gain employment. Currently, our library system hosts the following classes that assist with job searches: resume writing, perfecting your resume, create and sell your resume, interview like a pro, job strategies for mature workers, and search and apply for jobs. Additionally, there are classes to learn 4 levels of QuickBooks Pro and multiple levels of Microsoft branded products, such as 365, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Many of these are listed as being Career Academy classes, but other than the name 'Career Academy' there is nothing linking these with a larger program. While the classes are enough to help many people find jobs, there are patrons who need more resources.

SOLUTION

My project would pull existing resources together and have 2 career specialists, one full-time and one part-time, administer a more holistic program. Right now, patrons must assemble their own career curriculum from the resources we have available, but this would give patrons someone to help guide them to the resources that would most help them.

In addition to adding 2 staff members, 2 basic laptops would be purchased to allow for patrons to conduct Zoom interviews for jobs, one study room would be outfitted with a suitable professional background for online meetings and interviews, and classes would be added to our lineup. Also, a cubicle and changing room would be set up with two rolling racks of professional clothing (one for suits, ties, pants, and shirts and the other for dresses, pantsuits, blouses, slacks, and skirts) that would be available for loan. This way, patrons could use the clothes for either in-person interviews or for virtual interviews for jobs. The Career Services area would also stock things like resume paper and thank you notes.

Classes would need to be added to our existing schedule, including classes for setting up a LinkedIn profile and the full line of Google office products, like Sheets, Docs, and Slides. There will also be an overview class for some commonly used programs like Slack, Agile, and Trello. Soft skills classes to be added include: professional etiquette, business communication, and using a planner effectively.

The interview attire for loan will start with donations from the community. For the sake of maintaining a manageable collection, donations will be arranged by appointment and items will be sorted while the person donating is there- items deemed unusable (whether due to condition or fashion or simply an excess of items in that size) will be given back to the person who brought them in. A small storage cabinet will be used for overflow to replenish the rolling racks, but once space has been maxed out,

donations will be halted until further notice. We understand that we will not be able to always provide all sizes, but we will try to carry as much of a selection as space and donations allow.

A note on the clothing loans: these will not be fined items, nor will they have a barcode or be inventoried other than a working spreadsheet maintained by Career Academy staff. If an outfit is returned in unusable condition, it will simply be discarded. If the patron asks to keep the outfit for use in the job, we will let them keep it. These items were provided at no charge to us and the benefit for the patron could be invaluable. The career specialists will have full discretion to gift additional items from the lending closet to a patron. If clothing items are returned to the library, they will be sent for cleaning. Our marketing team will reach out to local dry cleaners to see if any of them would be willing to provide free or discounted service for this need. Because we will allow patrons to keep these clothes, we do not anticipate dry cleaning to be a heavily needed service.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

Staffing: While this program is starting up, we will add 1 full-time employee and 1 part-time employee and 6 months after the program has fully launched, staffing needs will be re-evaluated.

Equipment: 2 laptop computers, 1 tall standing plant (or plant with a stand), 1 framed art print, 2 commercial grade rolling racks, 100 hangers, thank you cards, and resume paper will need to be purchased. A storage cabinet will be pulled from existing inventory for use with this project as well.

Training: There will be 3 training sessions given for various departments within the library to ensure that questions about the new program are answered for staff to be able to adequately present this program to inquiring patrons.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Marketing & Public Relations
Training & Education Center
Circulation
Questline
Facilities & Operations

This Career Academy Expansion will build on what currently exists but will need participation from several departments. The Marketing and Public Relations team will develop materials to announce the new services in the Career Academy. The new Career Academy will fall under the department of the Training and Education Center (TEC) and will use office space within that department. All TEC staff will be trained on what's new to the Career Academy title and the services offered. Circulation staff who monitor the information desk at our main branch and Questline (our information hotline) staff will also be given this training. Facilities and Operations will be needed for setting up the interview room and moving the storage cabinet from storage. On an ongoing basis, TEC staff who work with the sewing classes will provide occasional light mending of donated clothing items, such as replacing missing buttons.

ASSESSMENT

To assess the value and worth of this program, each career specialist will keep careful notes and numbers on patrons who completed the programs, what services they used, classes they completed, and what jobs were offered, as well as how many times each candidate applied and interviewed. We will also administer surveys to those who have completed the program to gain insight on their satisfaction with the Academy.

Surveys will feature a 5-point scale for quick answers plus an open answer section. Our goal is to have scores averaging 4 points or higher for the following: satisfaction with the classes- both the variety offered and the content of the classes, satisfaction with materials available to patrons for securing employment, and overall satisfaction with Career Academy services and staff. Because employment is outside of the control of library staff and also largely dependent on the current market and each patron's skills, our aim is to see at least 75% of the patrons who enter the program find employment within 3 months.

BUDGET

Category	Expenses	Comments
Salaries		
Staff 1.5 FTE (Full Time Equivalent)	\$51,480	\$16.50 per hour
Benefits		
1 Full Time	10,296	30% FICA
.5 FTE	1313	7.65% FICA
Library Materials		
Storage cabinet		Sourced from existing inventory not in use
Supplies		
Resume paper	60	Initial purchase 400 sheets
Thank you notes	50	Initial purchase 200
100 hangers	44	In the style of 'huggable hangers' to allow more storage in smaller space
2 rolling racks	220	
Tall plant	60	Ficus or fiddle leaf fig, artificial
Framed art print	100	We will attempt to source from a local artist
Travel		
none		
Equipment		
2 new laptops	800	HP Laptop 15t-dy500
TOTAL	\$64,423	

TIMELINE

Because this plan includes developing several classes and building a collection of professional clothes, the timeline until the launch of this program is 6 months. The timeline for the entire process, including sharing results, is 9 months.

For three months, we will add an item to our email newsletter that we are collecting gently used and like new professional clothing as donations for our Career Center. During the 4th month, if we find that we do not have enough donations coming in regularly, we will expand our reach by pulling the social media team in to promote this initiative. If we find that we are collecting far more donations by the 4th month than expected, we will stop adding the information in the newsletters and pull the social media team in to help us schedule a few mentions per year to keep donations at a level that can be maintained.

Our marketing team requires two months of notice to add projects to their schedule, so they will be included from the beginning of this process.

Due Date	Activity
March 9, 2023	Present proposal for approval by Board of Trustees
March 13, 2023	Meet with MPR to plan calendar for rollout of marketing materials
March 17, 2023	Post job openings for one FT and one PT staff member
March 27, 2023	Meeting with TEC staff for additional class curriculum creation
April 3, 2023	Interviews with job candidates begin
April 17, 2023	Job offers made
April 24, 2023	Onboarding new hires begins, first meeting with TEC department
April 28, 2023	Announcement in email newsletter for professional clothing donations; Purchase of 100 hangers and 2 rolling racks
May 8, 2023	Meeting with MPR to review marketing materials in process (brochure, posters, and descriptions)
May 15, 2023	Test run for new classes throughout week
May 25, 2023	Meeting with CareerSource Central Florida (networking)
May 30, 2023	Second request for clothing donations added to email newsletter
June 5, 2023	Review notes from surveys and instructor observations for classes; make adjustments to classes as needed
June 19, 2023	Review class lineup, determine additional class needs, begin next round of curriculum development/class outlines
June 29, 2023	Third request for clothing donations added to email newsletter (if needed)
July 5, 2023	Search for appropriate local art for interview room begins, standing plant purchase
July 10, 2023	Meeting with MPR to review marketing materials in process (bookmarks, any special materials for launch, scheduling inclusion and feature in our magazine)
July 17, 2023	Test run for new classes throughout week

July 18, 2023	Facilities and Operations department scheduled to hang new art in interview room
July 19, 2023	Full review of collected professional clothing- hung in size order, on respective rolling racks; review need for additional donations
July 24, 2023	Meet with local dry cleaners to form partnership arrangement this week
August 7, 2023	Purchase 2 laptops through IT department
August 21, 2023	IT department completes setups and programs installed on laptops
September 1, 2023	Labor Day weekend kickoff for Career Academy; appointments and full class schedule begin today
September 5, 2023	Post-Labor Day review, SWOT analysis with career specialists and TEC team
September 2023	Program continues, surveys start to come in from patrons who have completed program
October 2, 2023	Review of first month
December 4, 2023	Review of all career specialist observations, surveys received. Prepare 3-minute slideshow with results for Board meeting
December 14, 2023	Presentation of first three months of services to Board of Trustees