Guidelines for Partner Organizations: Overview of Practices

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1. Overview

Partner organizations for Summer Programs include Pre-College programs, Internship hosts and Enrichment programs. Each of these partners requires a different arrangement with Achievement First or with an AF high school; each must be equally committed to providing our scholars with productive, engaging, and challenging summer opportunities. The Summer Programs team should work with each partner organization to fully orient them on our scholars, the purpose of summer programs, and how summer programs aid our goal of seeing scholars through to college graduation.

2. Goals

There are three basic goals for partnership work:

* Summer Program spots match enrollment increases and scale with bands of academic competitiveness
* 100% of partner programs asked renew their spots with us for next year agree to continue partnering
* 100% of scholars complete a best fit Summer Program

Please consult the CARC for specific month-to-month metrics around how to ensure we reach these goals. These are shared network-wide goals that the Summer Program at each AF high school will work toward. Individual AF high schools may elect to set additional school-specific goals.

3. Key Messages & Mindsets

Every member of the Summer Programs team understands and spreads the message that:

* The goal of pre-college program is for scholars to explore college level course work in areas of interest, increase their academic independence, experience the responsibility and freedom of life on a college campus, and practice adjusting to a new social environment and building relationships across areas of difference including race and class.
* The goal of internships is for scholars to learn about a particular professional field, increase their professional skills, and understand the importance of earning their college degree in order to open doors to the professional world. Summer internships are an excellent way for scholars to receive this messaging in a real-world context and from a professional mentor.
* The goal of enrichment programming is to allow students to pursue an area of interest while increasing confidence and independence for students who have not yet been successful in our school and may not be ready for an internship or pre-college experience.
* Partner organizations have the chance to work with our scholars and connect to AF’s mission. It is also an opportunity to assign leadership roles to associates within their organization, and invest in a long-term partnership.
* The AF Summer Programs Coordinator plays an essential role in facilitating a successful summer experience for scholars, families and partner organizations and is most effective by building strong relationships and channels of communications with all stakeholders.

4. Core Strategies

* Build and maintain professional partnerships: You will work to maintain outstanding partner organization relationships in order to ensure their long-term support of AF scholars year after year. You will do this through communicating frequently, in a timely manner and with positivity. We want partners to say that AF High Schools are a pleasure to work with and that we make working with us and with our scholars easy. This means that we call and email partners proactively and are concise and positive in our interactions.
* Advocate for scholars: For programs that are selective or for which financial aid is negotiable, advocate for your strong students who you know will be reliably strong for the opportunity. Advocating means picking up the phone and calling the program manager or point person at a partner organization to provide context on a scholar or their financial situation and asking for admission or aid for them. For internships, advocating means setting realistic but high expectations with internship hosts about high school students’ strengths and areas for growth and supporting both parties in reaching those expectations.
* Investing students and families in the importance of summer programs: It is critical to work with students and families to ensure understanding of the importance of these experiences in building a competitive profile as a college applicant and as well as developing as a whole person.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Successfully supporting partner organizations will require teamwork. The table below illustrates how the summer program coordinator will work with key partners and stakeholders to support our students through the Summer Programs process:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Owner | Summer Programs Coordinator |
| Approves | Dean of College |
| Participant(s) | Network Director of College, points of contact/relationship managers at partner organizations/entities, scholars, families |
| Informed | Principal |
| Consulted | School based team college, FOL teachers |

6. Calendar of Key Dates

Summer Programs Coordinators should sit down at the beginning of the academic year in August consulting the Road Map of the Year in the Summer Programs Overview in conjunction with the CARC and develop a detailed calendar for partnership management that includes:

* Key dates for initial outreach for the year to existing or prospective partners
* Key dates for formalizing/confirming partner “spots” (number of placements at a given organization/program)
* Key dates for partner orientations and for communication leading up to those orientations
* Key dates for ongoing communication over the summer while students are on site