



Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning

Virtual Career Connections in a COVID-19 World

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Rationale:

As COVID-19 continues, more now than ever, students are asking for stronger justification to take our courses, while seeing a clear link to how they connect to their next, and in many cases uncertain, career steps. Over summer semester, I added a virtual career dialogue session to my course as a UCF Career Services NACE Faculty Champion where we created virtual engagement opportunities to connect students with GIS industry mentors who shared their advice and job duties to inspire students. This panel included recent UCF alumni as well. As a follow-up successful program this fall, our Citizen Science GIS at UCF research group continued a virtual speaker series to engage students and industry panelists to share career advice. I also included a similar session in my graduate student professional development seminar. The benefits of the program included stronger connections between classroom/career content; and stronger connections between students and career mentors.

Description:

Step 1: Invite speakers to serve as career connections by reaching out to industry leaders who are asked to either join in a virtual Zoom session for class, or during a bi-weekly careers session outside of class.

Step 2: Talk with speakers individually about themes of importance to them, which might resonate with our students.

Step 3: Promote the talks to social media and email lists. This includes class time sessions and external, public non-class time events with career mentors.

Step 4: Host Zoom sessions, and record for those who cannot attend live.

Step 5: Post Zoom recordings.

Step 6: Have students write a 1-2 page reflection paper asking them to connect what they heard from career mentors back to class and/or research assistantship content.

Step 7: Send follow-up emails connecting mentors and students who are interested for more customized, one-on-one meetings where appropriate.

Step 8: Have students write cover letters/apply for internships/entry level GIS positions focused on skills discussed in the sessions with career mentors.

Step 9: Repeat and expand each semester.

Step 10: Evaluation in spring 2021.

Appraisal:

None at this time. But planned for spring 2021.

References:

GIS Jobs Clearinghouse: <https://www.gjc.org/>

Link or explanation: https://ucf-my.sharepoint.com/personal/ti752464_ucf_edu/Documents/FCTL_Careers_TL-Hawthorne.docx?web=1