



University of Colorado Colorado Springs

University of Colorado Colorado Springs Alumni & Friends Association

NEAT Grant: Growing the UCCS Alumni & Friends Volunteer Program

Project Purpose

The purpose of this grant project is to fund growth and innovation in our two-year-old UCCS Alumni and Friend Volunteer Program. After a successful first two years of the program, we are seeking funding that will enable us to leverage the promising aspects of the program, experiment with new ideas for volunteering and stewardship, adopt best practices of other programs and help fill funding gaps as we face university budget cuts.

Our program formally launched in spring 2021, and in April 2022, we celebrated with a first-ever Volunteer Appreciation Reception to acknowledge the more than 300 alumni and friends who volunteered in the past year. We are already seeing exciting fruits of our labors. These include alumni who return for multiple volunteer opportunities, volunteering by major donors and donor prospects, and engagement by alumni and friends both inside and outside Colorado Springs, with in-person and virtual opportunities.

Project Scope

We would like to develop and execute a grant project that will enable us to leverage the early successes of our volunteer program. This project will include research on best practices for volunteer programs in higher education and nonprofit organizations, as well as with the vendor of our volunteer technology platform.

The constituency group that will be involved is alumni and friends of UCCS who want to give their time and talent to UCCS programs and students. Research shows that volunteer programs enrich both the volunteers and the institutions they serve and provide a strong pipeline for philanthropic support.

We recognize that our alumni and friends are not a monolith, so creation of volunteer opportunities for specific segments is important. This includes UCCS faculty and staff alumni, out-of-town alumni who can participate virtually and recent graduates who may not be ready to give philanthropically but can give of their time and talent.

Process and Timeline

Summer 2022: analysis of 2020-2022 volunteer metrics and benchmark study of higher education and nonprofit volunteer programs.

Fall 2022: Hiring of student worker, analysis of volunteer information, creation of new/expanded volunteer opportunities; end of year volunteer stewardship mailing.

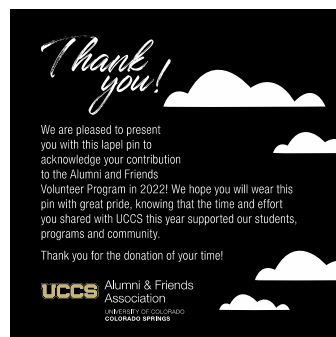
Spring 2023: evaluation of current stewardship activities, creation of expanded activities.

Creative Samples

Coffee mug that is used as university swag for all constituents (alumni, friends, parents, faculty and staff) – includes volunteer website URL



End-of-year stewardship mailing to all FY23 volunteers (400+) that shares impact information and a collector pin for 2022 (second in a series) on a small note card.



- End of year volunteer mailing and commemorative 2022 pin
- Costs for sponsored and boosted social media posts promoting UCCS Alumni and Friend Volunteer Program
- Volunteer appreciation event expansion, for additional volunteers, mailed invitations, thank-you token item.

Impact and Conclusions

Desired outcomes we were able to achieve:

1. Hire and train a part-time student worker who was a freshman and will continue with our office next year.
2. Purchase much needed supplies and collateral material to share with our campus partners and UCCS alumni / friends.
3. Send a comprehensive end of year thank you mailing to all 2022 volunteers that included a card and lapel pin (create a unique one each year).
4. Now offer parking passes to our volunteers that come for an on-campus volunteer experience.
5. Incorporate our volunteer website onto general alumni printed material and a swag item (coffee mug) that is used in multiple ways across campus and in the community.
6. Ongoing benchmarking and research on other growing volunteer programs in the higher education space.
7. Expand our in-person and virtual volunteer offerings to include multiple scholarship reviews across campus, Clean the Creek expanded activities, Write-A-Mountain Lion volunteer lunch, etc.

This grant enabled us to make huge strides in our young volunteer program. It allowed us to have a bit of financial freedom to experiment with ideas and concepts that will benefit the volunteer program and connections to UCCS alumni for years to come.

Thank you again!

Lisa Bartholme
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