

CURRY COLLEGE

2020-2021 EXCELLENCE IN PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION AWARD

Maryann Gallant, Applied Technology

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION:

Deanna Gordon and Maryann Gallant have implemented a program that creates a mentor network between current technology seniors and members of our Alumni community. Seniors taking Senior Seminar: This is IT! with either Deanna or Maryann this spring are participating in a new mentor program which utilizes members of our technology alumni community.

The job search process is very different in the pandemic world. Most, if not all, job interviews and hiring events like the College's annual career events are taking place virtually. Students need to be prepared for this process and be comfortable with presenting themselves in a virtual environment. To assist students in rehearsing for these interactions, each senior has been matched up with an alumni mock interview volunteer mentor. 18 alumni have volunteered to participate as mentors. These alums are currently working in the IT or SD field and bring their experiences to our students. Since this is a virtual activity, we had the opportunity to expand our alumni community network beyond a "car ride" from Curry; we have alumni from as far away as California, Washington and Florida.

Mentors act as potential employers. Each alumni mentor has been given contact information for one or two seniors in the Senior Seminar class. The alumni volunteer pretends to have a job for which the senior is qualified. They reach out to the senior via email; as if they are recruiting a candidate for a job, they request resumes, respond to inquiry emails, and schedule mock job interviews. Upon completion of the mock interview, the mentors complete a performance assessment on their student's performance during the mock interview process. The assessment is posted to Qualtrics so each mentor is assessing the senior's performance on the same criteria. The mentor also provides one on one feedback to the seniors based on their interactions. Seniors also can ask questions and seek advice from the mentor. Some mentors have said that they spoke with the senior for over an hour and found them to be a complete delight to work with. They report that in a short period of time they were able to connect and will follow up with their mentee as time goes on.

Each alum and senior will determine how they will participate in mentoring and guidance beyond the mock interview. The mock job interview is the springboard to an ongoing mentor/mentee relationship. All students are invited to join the mentor's LinkedIn network. The assessment data the mentors provide will be used by the course instructors to further coach the seniors in developing quality interview skills that will propel them to job offers. We expect that this mentor program will continue long after our seniors graduate and our seniors are already volunteering for next year and are thrilled at the opportunity to continue to build their relationship with Curry.