Introduction

Pathway to Research Administration (PTRA) is an internship-to-career program focused on building a robust workforce to meet growing service demands and constant changes to Campus Shared Services Research Administration (CSS RA). The CSS RA is getting more challenging as it is a holistic position that requires a combination of technical skills, breadth in institutional knowledge, and most importantly, core competencies. The program’s goal is to develop skills and knowledge, resulting in matriculating the interns into full-time Research Administrators (RA). As the RA workforce is gradually decreasing due to retirement and job market competition, it is important that this program is implemented to establish a pipeline for the CSS RA workforce.

Problem

Due to constant turnover and retirement trend, CSS Research Administration is lacking sustainable pipeline to cope with rapidly shrinking workforce unable to adapt to changes in technology and meet growing service demands.

As of April 2016, based on Retirement Metrics data from Cal Answers, CSS as a total of 153 Research Administrators. 7% who have at least 15 years of service and are at the age of 50+ years, are likely to retire. What’s even more alarming is 50% of CSS RAs are eligible to retire. Although they may not retire soon, but as time progresses, they may retire within the next 5 years as economic environment becomes favorable for retirement.

Program Timeline

Phase 1

• RAPDP
• In-class training & Stimulation
• Sponsor Exploration
• Team-building
• RA Buddy

Phase 2

MONTH 1

• 1st Subject Matter Exploration / Presentation
• Team-building
• Low Level Transactions *
• Midpoint Reflection

MONTH 2 - 3

• 2nd Subject Matter Exploration / Presentation
• Team-building
• Small Portfolio Assignment *
• Final Reflection

* To be decided by the RA Buddy and RA Supervisor

Sample of RA Interns’ RA Exposure

There is still high demand for RAs in the SF Bay Area. UC Berkeley is located in a very competitive region with increased growth in tech and healthcare industries. Institutions such as UCSF, Stanford, as well as private companies, such as Genentech, are in need of RAs.

Summary / Results

Who are we recruiting?

• New graduates
• Pursuing career in non-profits
• “Generation Z”
• Brand Loyalty

1. During the recruitment phase between May-July of 2017, of the 55 applicants that applied, five (5) were interviewed. Two (2) were ultimately hired as RA 1 starting mid-August 2017.

2. During the first three (3) months, the interns took RAPDP courses and participated in weekly discussions with the PTRA Program manager. They were assigned low-level tasks by their RA Buddies. By the end of the 3rd month, the RA interns were assigned to small number of Principal Investigators and their portfolios, including direct assistant in proposal submissions. The RA interns also researched RA-related topics and presented their findings to RAs at a monthly CSS-RA Forum.

3. Based on the RA interns’ midpoint evaluation, their learning outcome was scored very high, exceeding the project’s initial expectation. As a result, the RA interns were hired as RA2 by end of December 2017. 1.5 months before the end of the program.

Long Term Goal

Retention

Occasional recruitment from UCs

Occupational opportunities

Recruitment within UC and outside

PTRA Program Manager

Recruitment

Training & Development

PTRA (RA 1)

Institutional Knowledge

Outside opportunities

Retirement