

By: Kellyn Amodeo

High school students benefiting from UGA career programs



Butler-Mayes of the College of Education discuss college r the college.

(Photo by Dorothy Kozlowski/UGA)

In just a few weeks as an intern at the University of Georgia, high school student Kiara Plummer has learned more than how to update websites and flyers.

She's also learned what it means to be part of a world-class university.

"This program has changed my view of UGA. It makes me want to attend college even more than before," said Plummer, a junior at **Athens Community Career Academy** who is working in the UGA **College of Education**. "This program helps me look forward to what's ahead and helps me prepare for my future."

Plummer is one of nine Clarke County high school students who are benefiting from two programs that provide part-time jobs and internships.

“It feels amazing to work at the University of Georgia,” she added. “This experience helps me understand what it’s like to be a college student and helps me learn about early childhood education, which I hope to pursue after high school.”

The **Great Promise Partnership** and the Work-Based Learning Program place local high school students in positions at UGA, giving them work experience while they’re still enrolled in high school. GPP was launched by the Department of Community Affairs in 2012 as a way to help at-risk students complete high school. It was implemented in the Clarke County School District in 2016. CCSD has offered the Work-Based Learning Program for years, with the number of participants tripling in the past year.



Kiara Plummer staffs the College of Education table at the recent Professional Association of Georgia Educators Student Day in the Tate Center. (Photo by Dorothy Kozlowski/UGA)

Students are placed in jobs related to their post-college plans. GPP students are currently working part-time jobs in the Environmental Safety Division, Facilities Management Division and Auxiliary Services. Work-based learning students, like Plummer, have internships in the College of Education, College of Engineering and College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

Johnelle Simpson, GPP and Work-Based Learning coordinator with CCSD, sees the importance of this program as a way for students to gain work experience but also exposure to the university.

“These programs give students a taste of what their future in a particular field might be like,” said Simpson, a 2016 graduate of UGA and former president of the Student Government Association. “The University of Georgia has a unique opportunity to serve the students through these worksite placements, introducing them to campus as a potential educational institution or career opportunity in the future.”

Duties for these students range from day-to-day administrative tasks to hands-on lab work alongside UGA students and faculty. Plummer helps College of Education visitors, manages website updates and even attends college fairs and other events with the staff.

“As a part of our team, she’s learned more about her career goals and what she needs to do to achieve them, and experienced the ins and outs of college life firsthand.” — Julia Butler-Mayes

“Having a Career Academy high school student in our office has been a wonderful experience,” said Julia Butler-Mayes, director of student services in the College of Education and Plummer’s supervisor. “Kiara brings enthusiasm and curiosity to everything she does, whether she is honing her skills on day-to-day administrative tasks or pushing herself outside of her comfort zone interacting with prospective students and families at our events. As a part of our team, she’s learned more about her career goals and what she needs to do to achieve them, and experienced the ins and outs of college life firsthand.”

Last fall, GPP and Work-Based Learning students were offered training on campus through the [UGA Career Center](#). The interactive workshop focused on workplace etiquette, such as appropriate attire and communication skills.

Both the university and the Athens community continue to see benefits from these programs.

“These programs welcome more students to campus, potentially driving them here to further their education after high school or as a future career,” Simpson said. “The community always benefits when students have a smooth transition into their post-graduation lives. It’s a win-win for everyone.”