



Athens, Ga. - As a result of President Jere W. Morehead's meetings with community leaders in April, the University of Georgia will be offering workforce development and work-based learning initiatives to local youth beginning this fall. Morehead's conversation centered on economic development and education, and how the university can play a role in both areas.

"One of the priorities of the University of Georgia is to support the Athens community," Morehead said. "The goals of these programs are to promote the importance of graduation and prepare students for the workforce. Students will gain practical experience that they will carry for years to come, as well as gain exposure to the University of Georgia and all we have to offer."



UGA has joined the Great Promise Partnership, a program implemented in the Clarke County School District and coordinated through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs that connects organizations with local at-risk youth through part-time jobs.

"After hearing the community feedback, this partnership seemed to be a natural connection for the university," said Alison McCullick, director of community relations for the UGA Office of Government Relations. "GPP has been a successful workforce development program across the state of Georgia for five years, and as the largest employer in Clarke County, the university was interested in becoming engaged."

Through GPP, part-time jobs will be offered to students at risk of dropping out of high school to provide practical workforce experience, as well as extra support and mentoring opportunities to keep students on track for graduation. Part-time job placement will begin in spring 2018.

In addition to GPP, UGA will offer internships across the university to encourage work-based learning development. Internships will be based in a student's field of interest, and will directly relate to academic goals set by the students. Internships will be available in multiple areas such as the College of Education, the Office of Research and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, with more opportunities being added throughout the year.

The UGA Small Business Development Center, a public service and outreach unit, will also be involved, hosting a seminar this fall for the participants covering job skills, job traits that employers value once a job offer is received, and opportunities to continue to grow and develop once the job has begun.

Johnelle Simpson, Great Promise Partnership and work-based learning coordinator with the Clarke County School District, is eager to work alongside the university.

"I'm excited that the University of Georgia will be partnering with the Great Promise Partnership Program and the Clarke County School District to provide work-based learning opportunities to students," he said. "This collaboration is a win-win situation for everyone-schools, businesses, students and the community."

For more information on UGA's involvement with the Athens community, visit uga.edu/information/community.