

Learning for Life (L4L) at Rhode Island College Graduate Assistant (Full-Time) Lead Navigator

Learning for Life (L4L) is a Student Success office that focuses on connecting students to a wide range of resources, services, and opportunities for college success. Since its inception in 2012, L4L has been shaped by a collective of stakeholders, including founding and ongoing partnerships with the College Crusade of Rhode Island, College Visions, and the RIC School of Social Work. Through a network of trained peer Navigators and staff support, L4L weaves a connection between the students we serve, called L4L Scholars, and resources that the college and community can provide them through the development of collaborative relationships.

L4L Navigators serve as a key component of the support provided to students through Learning for Life. L4L Navigators provide peer mentorship, case management, and related support services and resources to address the needs of L4L Scholars with various academic, mental health, social support, and basic needs. L4L Navigators do not provide direct counseling services, although they do utilize a person-centered, assessment-based holistic approach to assessing a student's overall well-being and make referrals to appropriate mental health professionals, as needed. L4L Navigators focus on "assessment, student advocacy, student empowerment, and follow-up and resolution".¹ All L4L Navigators are expected to maintain a professional representation of the L4L mission when interacting with all off and on campus offices, as well as and most especially with, students served.

Contribution to Professional Development

The Lead Navigator experience provides students an opportunity to:

- Work in collaboration with peers, staff and faculty as well as community partners
- Gain real world case management experience by assisting students who experience disruption in the normal course of study as a result of academic difficulty and other educational barriers, including housing and food insecurity, transportation, childcare, and mental health issues.
- Develop a global understanding as they interact with students from diverse life experiences including socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, race, gender and sexual identities, ability, etc.
- Practice written and oral communications through documentation, L4L network materials development, and presentations across campus and in the community.
- Engage in ongoing training and development via individual and group supervision, to enhance communication, team-building, critical thinking, problem-solving, advocacy, and organizational skills.
- Gain practical experience providing introductory supervision to assigned Navigator(s) in their Network
- Form meaningful mentor relationships with Navigators and Scholars, providing the guidance they need to reach their highest potential.

According to feedback provided by previous Navigators, the Navigator experience provides opportunities for personal and professional growth and leadership development. Navigators have opportunities to practice skills and competencies inherent in the field of social work and related disciplines, such as establishing professional boundaries, privacy and confidentiality, and other ethical principles. As part of the Navigator training, all students complete the Navigator Certificate Program, earning 30 CEUs through the RIC Office of Professional Studies and Continuing Education.

Duties and Responsibilities

The following activities are expected of all student Navigators who are a part of L4L:

- Outreach to students for participation in L4L
- Provide interested students with an orientation to L4L, explaining policies and services to be provided, and expectations for student participation
- Provide one-on-one consultation with students seeking assistance regarding life barriers that may impede their ability to remain successful

¹ Stacy Raphael and Sara Goldrich-Rab, "Social work case management" [pdf file], *The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice* (2020): pg.2 https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BeyondTheFoodPantry_CaseManagement.pdf

- Carry a diverse caseload of Scholars and provide support services, including completing assessments for determining and addressing students' needs, completing individualized support plans to identify goals, and reviewing progress towards objectives.
- Communicate consistently with Scholars, utilizing a variety of methods (email, phone call, Zoom meetings, in-person, classroom presentations, etc.)
- Maintain timely, appropriate and accurate written and electronic records and correspondence related to Scholars served
- Foster self-advocacy in Scholars to manage their academic and personal responsibilities
- Provide students with institutional knowledge concerning policies and procedures
- Advocate for Scholars individually and systemically, providing support and guidance to navigate college systems
- Assist with outreach efforts and participate in student events, workshops, classroom presentations, Community Lunches, etc.
- Communicate with L4L staff and clinical supervisor as issues arise
- Attend All Staff Meetings and participate in regular supervision, both individually with the Educational Support Coordinator and collectively with the Associate Director

Additionally, the following activities are expected of Lead Navigators (Graduate Assistants):

- Support Navigators in their assistance to students served via biweekly meetings and check-ins, this includes but is not limited to:
 - Reviewing progress notes, assisting with the development of Scholar Plans, sharing knowledge of resources, problem-solving, and addressing issues as they arise
- Follow-up with Navigators who are working on special projects.
- Audit files ensuring updated records for assigned Navigators.
- Help Maintain the L4L Asset Map
- Co-facilitate group supervision with fellow Lead Navigators.
- Meet with the Educational Support Coordinator (ESC) on a consistent basis to review the status of assigned cases and provide feedback about supervised Navigator(s)
- Assume other duties, responsibilities, and special projects as needed.

Qualifications

- Accepted graduate degree candidate enrolled in plan of study
- Ability to work both independently and as part of a team, to accept some direction but also be a self-starter
- Background in human services and/or education (preferred but not required)
- Efficient time management skills
- Desire to work with and support college students, as well as collaborate with campus and community organizational partners
- Strong verbal and written skills
- Proficiency in basic computer applications
- Strong respect and desire to support diverse and inclusive communities

How to Apply

Along with the application and resume, candidates should also send a letter describing their qualifications for and interest in the position to L4L Director, Joise Garzon at jgarzon@ric.edu.