Proposing an Activity for inclusion on the EL Transcript

Activity Title: **Four Athens Startup Internship Program**

Department: **Office of University Experiential Learning**

Unit: **Office of the Vice President for Instruction**

Activity Director (name and contact): Karen Saunders, Office of University Experiential Learning, Administrative Manager Internships, ksaunders@uga.edu

Contact for more information (if different from Activity Director): Jordan Burke, Executive Director, Four Athens, jordan@fourathens.com

Address: 1242 ½ S. Lumpkin Street

   Athens, GA 30602

Activity location, if different from Address: Internship employers are local to Athens; mentoring and networking events will often take place at Four Athens main office, 345 W. Hancock Ave, Athens, GA

Website: fourathens.com

Short Description: 12-week internship program with Athens based startup companies and small businesses through Four Athens

Description: Four Athens is a nonprofit that works with startup and small businesses in Athens on all of their startup needs. The Four Athens community is a powerful, positive, and creative engine driving innovation, growth, and economic expansion in Athens. Four Athens has developed the “Startup Internship Program” (SIP) to connect UGA students with Athens area startup and small businesses. The SIP is a 12-week cohort program that places students in interdisciplinary teams and partners each team with a local company. The SIP program allows interns unique access to area business leaders for learning and mentorship, and provides connections with a wide array of companies. The students work in interdisciplinary teams with Athens companies on real world projects. These teams will draw from different majors depending on the needs of the client companies each semester. Students will usually come from Journalism, Communications, Business, Art, Engineering, and Computer Science majors. The projects will vary based on the client companies and their needs and could range from a downtown impact study to creating and testing new revenue models for small business and startup companies. The interns will gain experience in project management, goal setting, and will be challenged to apply knowledge they have learned in the classroom in their fields of study to real world projects. These students will learn to work as a team and as an expert in their area of study with the client company. This program is being co-sponsored by the Office of University Experiential Learning and Four Athens.

Date(s): Every Semester

Is this activity limited to a certain number of students? (Y/N)

Yes ☐ No X ☐

If Y: Maximum _______ Minimum _______
Is this activity limited to certain category/ies of students (e.g., from specific majors, or rising second-year students, or all-female)?

Yes ☒  No ☐

If Y: Please describe: Interns are placed in cohorts with 4 undergrad members. The teams are comprised of Marketing, Journalism, Communications, Management Information Systems, Computer Science, Art, and Graphic Design majors.

**Information below this line will be used for consideration/approval for the EL Transcript, and will not appear in the activity description in Engage when the activity is made public.**

**PROPOSE FOR INCLUSION IN EL TRANSCRIPT?**

Yes ☒  No ☐

If Y: Select AREA of EL Transcript: Internship

**Engagement:** Describe the extent of student involvement in the activity. Approved activities will involve student engagement at least equivalent to the depth and/or time commitment of a 1-credit-hour course. The interns in the Startup Internship Program (SIP) cohort are placed in smaller interdisciplinary teams (of 4-6 interns) and partnered with a client company for the semester. The teams are determined by the needs and projects of the client companies. Interns are expected to spend 5 to 10 hours a week (minimum 60 hours a semester) working on the team project for their client company. In addition to the work on their team project, the entire SIP cohort meets bi-weekly every other Tuesday for 2 hours. Individual teams meet weekly and also work or check in with their client company weekly.

**Mentorship:** Describe the nature of feedback, supervision, and mentorship of student participants. Approved activities will involve regular response to student work by the activity director and/or supervisor, supporting student reflection and integration of learning through the activity. The interns are mentored in several ways during the 12 week SIP. Each team has a team leader who is a UGA graduate student (MPA or MBA candidate working to satisfy a component of their program). The team leader meets with the team weekly. During these meetings, they discuss the project progress, roadblocks, resource needs, and project successes. The interns are also mentored by the Executive Director of Four Athens, Jordan Burke. Jordan leads all the bi-weekly meetings and meets with the team leaders weekly to assist the teams if needed. (Jordan has been a freelance software developer for 10 years. He has started several companies including Vitamin C, which he co-founded with a UGA student. The company was awarded UGA’s Next Top Entrepreneur award in 2014 from Terry College of Business Entrepreneurship Program.) The SIP program is designed to have a guest speaker discuss a relevant topic that businesses face at the bi-weekly meetings. The speakers will range from area entrepreneurs, business owners, and business leaders in the community. In the past topics included the importance of user/client experience, growing a small company, and customer discovery. At the end of the presentation, there is a question and answer session. These guest speakers provide a direct connection for UGA students to local companies and insight into startup and small businesses. The UGA point of contact and Activity Director is Karen Saunders, Office of University Experiential Learning Administrative Manager for Internships. Karen will meet with the SIP cohort at the beginning of the semester and will attend Demo Day presentations at the end of the semester. Karen will stay in contact with Jordan Burke, Executive Director Four Athens throughout the semester.

Approved activities will demonstrate learning outcomes in at least two of the following three areas (please respond to at least two): Challenge; Ownership; and Self or Social Awareness.
**Challenge:** Describe how students will engage in intellectually adventurous activity, pushing their own boundaries beyond what is familiar to them, exploring unknown territory, developing new knowledge and skills. At the beginning of the semester the SIP cohort is placed into smaller interdisciplinary teams and matched with a client company. The teams work with the client company on a real world project or issue the client company is facing. Projects could range from a downtown impact study for the Classic Center to creating and testing new revenue models for small business and startup companies. The client company could implement the final project, or use the results or research to improve or expand their business. The interns are given an overview of their client company and key performance goals that need to be met at the start of the semester. The interns apply classroom knowledge from their specific areas of study to produce the final product. Interns gain valuable insight and knowledge from each other by working with students in other disciplines and gain an understanding of how all areas are essential to the completed project. During this internship, the student acquires skills in time management, project development, effective communication, and creative problem solving when overcoming roadblocks. The interns learn to collaborate as a team and work independently to meet the goals/deliverables for the client company. The intern gains firsthand knowledge of challenges and issues that small business and startups face and how to address them.

**Ownership:** Describe how students exercise independent judgment in defining and/or executing the activity, or how students take ownership of the process and outcomes of the activity. At the first meeting of the semester, the entire SIP cohort participates in team building activities to become acquainted with the cohort. There is also an individual team building activity for the client company teams. This activity enables the intern to become familiar with the dynamics of their team for the semester. The team is assigned to their client company, and receives their company project, and goals. The objectives and projects vary depending on the needs of the client company. The intern understands their role within the team based on their area of study and project needs for the client company. The interns work both independently and as a team on planning, setting deadlines and trouble shooting. For example, the MIS student may be developing software or web-based applications for the client company, communications and/or marketing students might be creating social media, while the art student could be designing graphics to add to the project. All team members contribute to the project, present as a team on Demo Day, and understand how the company will use or implement the final product.

**Self or Social Awareness:** Describe how students will reflect on the activity, identifying values and attitudes developed through the activity in terms of personal, civic/social, and/or academic learning. The interns reflect on their work several times during the semester. They reflect on their progress as a team bi-weekly. This meeting includes Jordan Burke with Four Athens, team leaders (UGA Graduate students), SIP cohort, guest speakers, and may include client partners. At the bi-weekly meeting each team discusses their project and reports on successes, progress and road blocks they are experiencing. Depending on the project, the teams may also have a visual presentation. In addition to the bi-weekly meeting, teams report to their parent company weekly to discuss progress, issues, etc. At the weekly team meetings, each student shares what they are working on, and discuss their issues and progress. Each team presents mid semester to the SIP cohort, Four Athens leaders, partner companies, and members of the Athens business community. This includes an oral presentation and may also include visual aids depending on the project and where the team is in the process. At the end of the semester, the teams present their final project/product to the SIP cohort, client companies, project stakeholders, Four Athens, local businesses, and invited UGA faculty and staff. This includes an oral presentation and PowerPoint (or equivalent technology). In addition to the presentation each intern submits a one page reflective paper on their internship experience. The paper is reviewed by the Activity Director, Karen Saunders- Internship Manager Office of University Experiential Learning.