

*Small Jobs, Big Impact:
Maximizing Work-Study in
Financial Aid and Student
Services*


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IASFAA Spring 2026

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Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions
- Work-Study Across Institutions
- Turning Work-Study into Career Exposure
- Student Panel
- Practical Strategies for Offices
- Discussion/Questions



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	University of Iowa	Kirkwood Community College	Simpson College
Scale & Staffing	~1,000 work-study students across campus; team of 12 student employees in fin aid	~100-125 work-study students across campus; multiple offices; handful in financial aid	1 student in FA, 20 students working for ADM and "fin aid"
Roles & Responsibilities	Front line customer service; projects as assigned; tabling for campus events (orientation, etc.)	Front desk, phones, AmeriCorps/advising, back-office tasks	Project-heavy tasks (uploading documentation), less direct student service
Onboarding & Training	Module-based onboarding/training; shadowing "seasoned" student staff; knowledge checks/quizzes	Module-based onboarding; shadowing, weekly meetings, high-level FA exposure	Very brief onboarding; low FA knowledge; focus on system access and filing; training is task-specific
Supervision	Regular monthly meetings; yearly performance review/semesterly informal check-ins	Regular weekly team meetings; biweekly 1:1s; multiple touchpoints	Minimal supervision noted; students shared between offices
Challenges	Summer availability; other staff members' expectations; maintaining accountability without micromanaging	Recruitment of some students due to pay; balancing independence and oversight; limited upward mobility	Role mismatch when students rotate between ADM and FA; training constraints; front desk coverage gaps

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Turning Work-Study into Career Exposure

- Communication Studies major
- Found role via First-Gen Hawks
- Expectations vs. Reality
- Skills
- Transitioning to full-time




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Turning Work-Study into Career Exposure


Core Strategies for Career Exposure

- Normalize career conversations with student staff
 - Built in, intentional check-ins
 - Performance evaluations
- Name and translate skills
 - Students do not always automatically connect their tasks to skills they are developing
- Provide exposure to the profession
 - Share your career path/journey - embrace and normalize the "accidental" or "happencance" of it all
 - Invite them into different experiences:
 - Did you know students can be IASFAA members?
 - Advancement opportunities




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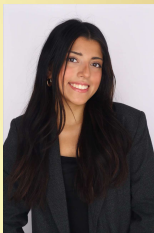
Student Panel



Ty Knudsen
University of Iowa
Senior Peer Advisor



Kaitlyn Wilburn
Kirkwood Community College
Americorps College Access
Specialist




Rachel Zambrano
University of Iowa
Peer Advisor

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Practical Strategies to Elevate Work-Study

- Structured onboarding
- Skill-building projects
- Career conversations
- Exposure to professional development
- Cross-office collaboration
 - Tabling events across campus



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Questions and Discussion



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