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University of Florida is a Top Producer of Peace Corps Volunteers

School Ranks Top 5 Nationally for Fifth Year in a Row

GAINESVILLE, Florida – The University of Florida (UF) produces more Peace Corps volunteers than any other school in Florida, according to the latest rankings released today. UF also ranks third nationally on the 2015 list of top Peace Corps volunteer-producing large colleges and universities.

“The Peace Corps provides an indispensable opportunity for young people out of college to gain work experience, learn a foreign language, and develop intercultural skills,” Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet said. “Volunteers make lasting change by living and working at the grassroots level in their communities of service and using their talents to tackle some of the most critical challenges in international development.”

Alumni from more than 3,000 colleges and universities nationwide have served in the Peace Corps since the agency’s founding in 1961, including more than 1,294 alumni from the University of Florida.

“UF consistently produces large numbers of volunteers and we expect that trend to continue,” said Peace Corps Southeast Regional Manager Eric Zdanowicz. “Florida is fertile ground for Peace Corps. If we look at results by region, five of the *Southeast’s* top ranking schools are Florida universities: The University of Florida, Florida State University, University of South Florida, Florida International University and University of Central Florida.”

This year’s rankings follow historic reforms to Peace Corps’ application and selection process, led by Hessler-Radelet, that resulted in a 22-year application high for the agency in 2014.

Sarah Higbee-Tindell of Tallahassee will soon join the 66 University of Florida undergraduate alumni who are already serving overseas. Higbee-Tindell will be departing for China in June to begin pre-service training as an Education volunteer.

“UF offers a well-thought out minor and certificate program for teaching English as a second language which helped me qualify for my teaching position,” said Higbee-Tindell. “I am excited about meeting my students and getting to know the community in which I will be living and working.”

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During the first three months of her service, Higbee-Tindell will live with a host family in China to become fully immersed in the country's language and culture. After acquiring the language and cultural skills necessary to assist her community, Higbee-Tindell will work in cooperation with the local people and partner organizations on sustainable, community-based development projects that improve the lives of people in China. The leadership, technical and cross-cultural skills that Higbee-Tindell develops will give her a competitive edge when she returns home. Peace Corps volunteers return from service as global citizens well-positioned for professional opportunities in today's global job market.

Higbee-Tindell joins the 305 Florida residents currently serving in the Peace Corps. More than 7,500 Floridians have served in the Peace Corps since 1961.

"UF alumni make great Peace Corps volunteers" according to Bobbi Stienmetz, the Peace Corps campus recruiter based at the University of Florida. "Peace Corps encourages students to put their degrees to use by making a difference in a community overseas while also getting two years of practical hands on experience."

University of Florida students interested in learning more about Peace Corps can contact Stienmetz at peacecorps@ufic.ufl.edu or (352) 294-2267.

2015 Top Producing Peace Corps Schools, Large Colleges and Universities

more than 15,000 undergraduates

Rank	School Name	City	Number of Volunteers
1	University of Washington	Seattle, WA	72
2	University of Wisconsin-Madison	Madison, WI	69
3	University of Florida	Gainesville, FL	66
4	Ohio State	Columbus, OH	64
5	University of Minnesota – Twin Cities	Minneapolis, MN	63

The 2015 rankings for top 25 schools nationwide is available at:

http://files.peacecorps.gov/pr/assets/topcolleges2015/15_PRS_TopColleges_list_Final_02.13.2015.pdf

About the Peace Corps: *The Peace Corps sends the best and brightest Americans abroad on behalf of the United States to tackle the most pressing needs of people around the world. Volunteers work at the grassroots level to develop sustainable solutions that address challenges in education, health, economic development, agriculture, environment and youth development. Through their service, volunteers gain a unique cultural understanding and a life-long commitment to service that positions them to succeed in today's global economy. Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961, nearly 220,000 Americans of all ages have served in 140 countries worldwide. For more information, visit www.peacecorps.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

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