

CREATING AND REPLICATING HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS

CASE STUDY

Maritime Logistics Education Taskforce

Exposing Students to Opportunities in the Logistics Industry

Savannah, GA



Carl Vinson Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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Exposing Students to Opportunities in the Logistics Industry

A popular Savannah field trip called “Follow the Container” was the spark behind an internship program that is bringing area students into the logistics industry. The Maritime Logistics Education Taskforce (MLET) is a business and education partnership in the coastal Georgia city that provides youth with information on the industry and helps bridge the skills gap between school and work by connecting students to internships. MLET members are volunteers from the logistics community who meet to discuss strategies for creating awareness of the field and provide workplace skills to the future workforce.

The field trip that inspired the program was initiated by businesses including Port City Logistics, Freightliner of Savannah, D.J. Powers Company, and Colonial Energy. The Georgia Port Authority allowed students to follow along with shipping containers as they moved through different ports. Students then learned about the transportation process from the partner companies. After the field trip’s success, members from port-related networking associations met to discuss options that would increase student involvement in the industry.

Savannah–Chatham County Public Schools were involved in the first year of student internship recruitment. Since then, Effingham County Schools, Savannah Technical College, and local private schools have joined. MLET has been able to recruit more schools by having a personal, physical presence in the classroom: Volunteers visit schools and speak about the logistics industry to groups of students. They also are available for one-on-one conversations with interested students and attend school board committee meetings to offer input about industry needs. Once a school agrees to be part of the process, MLET provides internship applications for interested students. MLET board members review intern applications from the school systems and match them with a business partner relevant to the student’s career aspirations. From there, students are responsible for contacting the employer, and the businesses have the freedom to design the internship work requirements.

MLET business partners have the same expectations for student interns as for regular employees. The paid internships consist of half days for five days a week over a 10-week period. During that time, students are expected to exhibit a strong work ethic, consistently show up to work on time, and effectively perform job duties. If they do not, they may be terminated. Even with these high expectations, 94% of the 67 interns to date have successfully completed the 200-hour work requirement. McLeod Rominger of Colonial Energy in Savannah, one of MLET’s founding members, attributes much of the partnership’s success to the informal recruitment strategies. “The idea is that by not having any set guidelines, we want the industry to know that there is a conduit for someone to organize, find the students in the school system, and pair them with the business partners,” he said. “From there, the business partners know how to hire and train people.”

