

Volunteer Project in Collaboration with the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS)

This ongoing collaborative project with the MODS was established in 2013 with the goal of improving the pedagogical and science content knowledge of students in the elementary science methods course using informal community resources. As part of the project, volunteering students receive a free entry pass courtesy of MODS and a guided tour of the exhibits. Based on the interest level and comfort level, the volunteer selects one exhibit in alignment with the Florida Sunshine State Science Standards, and develops a detailed lesson plan. The lesson plan receives feedback from the FAU course instructor and the designated MODS staff member in order to improve the pedagogical knowledge and science content knowledge of the volunteer. Once the lesson plan is ready to go, the volunteer works with the MODS staff member to select a date to teach the lesson to any group of visitors ranging from school children to senior citizens at the MODS. Students enrolled in SCE 4113 and SCE 4350 are eligible to participate in this project and receive Academic Service Learning Credits at Florida Atlantic University. This project also supports FAU platform in Community Education.

*“Utilizing the community resources allowed me to see different ways in creating assignments that are entertaining yet informational for my students to participate in.”
“In my presentation, I was able to relate to real-world examples such as showing statistics of shark... The real world examples helped the audience grasp the main concept...” “Now I can explain and give examples to people when they start stating what they believe are true about sharks that really aren’t true.”*

- Ashley, FAU Student

“This experience helps build the confidence of the student in delivering an educational experience to a diverse audience. This model also encourages the student to learn how to effectively leverage community resources, such as the museum, in building STEM lessons and connecting those lessons to the real world”

- Kim L. Cavendish, MODS former President

“This is a win-win collaboration because FAU students gain invaluable first-hand experience in developing and teaching with community resources while MODS visitors get an engaging lesson on one of the exhibits. Additionally, this helps participating FAU graduates bring real world connection to science”

- Valerie J. Bristol, Dean of Education