It is our pleasure to nominate Kristina Kofoot for the 2017 Excellence in AmeriCorps Programming and Service Awards as most compelling member experience in either building an ethnic of civic responsibility or having positive change in her life. Kristina has been serving as University of Northern Iowa’s (UNI) AmeriCorps VISTA since 2015. Kristina’s service has been vital to building an ethic of civic responsibility by coordinating new service-learning courses, facilitating and leading student service projects , and strengthening partnerships with public organizations in Waterloo and Cedar Falls, Iowa. Kristina has created eight new partnerships and projects in the Cedar Valley region of Iowa. In these projects/partnerships Kristina has managed over 1,000 volunteers. Kristina has assisted in writing three grants totaling more than $13,000 for Martin Luther King Day of Service Department of Residence food packing event where over 100 students to pack 22,000 meals. In May of 2016, Kristina led the organization of the Service-Learning Institute (SLI) that connected10 faculty members with 10 community partners in order to create new service learning courses. The faculty members and community partners co-created service-learning projects that will results in hundreds of students gaining community experience and learning about civic responsibility. Faculty have described the SLI as transformational and Kristina’s dedication helped make that possible. Kristina became a “go-to” person, supporting the work of the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley greeting all incoming freshman/transfer students letting them know about the ways to get involved and serve at UNI. Kristina also supported the Bridge program, providing incoming freshman a new opportunity for service projects as part of their orientation to UNI. Kristina has been instrumental in creating and launching a new community engagement database, including providing guidance and education about the system, which was vital to its usefulness. Kristina was diligent about supporting faculty, staff and students in the use of this system. She played a key role in completing the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. Kristina maintains the Community Engagement website, which was non-existent until Kristina developed the site. Finally, Kristina’s most impactful service has been in implementing UNI’s 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, Goal #3, Community Engagement. With community engagement making into the new strategic plan, the efforts around community engagement has been more important than ever before. Kristina has managed all this while pursuing her masters in Leisure Youth and Human Services, writing her dissertation on student loan debt impact on career choices and trajectories of graduates particularly those considering entering the nonprofit sector. Additionally, she is actively seeking employment after her two years of service that would continue her work in higher education professional development. Combining education and VISTA experience has helped shape her career path and prepare her for success. The accomplishments as a VISTA and the opportunities for professional development and growth allowed her to begin putting her master’s degree into action whilst earning it. This invaluable experience as a student and national service member have given her the tools to continue making a difference in the work force.