

# Tips on Developing an Internship Program

## Internship Overview

An internship is a work or learning experience with intentional learning goals: academic, career, and/or skill development. Internships can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few years, be paid or unpaid, for credit or not for credit, and can take place in almost any work or service setting. Additionally, an internship program creates a competitive advantage in recruiting the most qualified workers for your organization's needs. Interns often become full-time hires who already possess the necessary training for your organization, while you have previous knowledge of their on-the-job performance.

### Goals of An Internship

- Build positive, long-term relationships with potential full-time hires
- Benefit from the talents, enthusiasm, and innovation of CSU students while saving money.

### Advantages of An Internship

- Inexpensive, skilled labor
- Gain fresh ideas and perspectives
- Increase visibility and reputation on campus
- Adapt the internship program to meet your current (often short-term) goals/needs

### What Students Want

- Opportunities to gain experience and build networks.
- Resume-building skills and accomplishments.
- Make money; receive college credit;

## Internship Development

**Organizational audit:** Ensure there are adequate resources available. Do you have:

- Time to support an intern?
- Human resources available to support the internship?
  - Senior leadership buy-in and availability
  - Internship Coordinator – designated staff member within your organization
  - Mentors/Supervisors
- Physical resources?
  - Adequate work space
  - Technical requirements (telephone, computer, etc.)
- Financial resources?
  - Paid vs. unpaid
  - Stipends
  - Travel/parking reimbursement
  - Relocation allowance

### Hiring/Legal Miscellaneous

- Internship position description should include:
  - Position title; essential skills & qualifications needed; duties, responsibilities and expectations
  - A brief description of your organization, hours/week, pay rate (if applicable), start and end dates
- Hiring
  - Equal Employment Opportunity laws apply to the hiring of student interns
  - Check with your organization's home-office state for workers' compensation rules and regulations
  - Provide interns with your organization's safety and harassment policies, as employers may be held liable for intern safety and harassment issues
  - In general, student interns fall into an "at will" employment status
- Compensation
  - Work directly with your organization's legal counsel or contact your human resources department as your first resource regarding compensation and other legal issues
  - The Department of Labor allows interns to be unpaid if the following criteria as a "learner/trainee" are ALL met (NACE Spotlight 2007):

- The training must be comparable to that given at a vocational school
- The training must benefit the student
- The students would not replace regular employees
- The employer does not immediately benefit from the student's activities
- There is not a promise of a job following the training
- Employer and student understand that no wages will be given for the training period
- *If the above criteria are not met, interns must be paid at least minimum wage.* Often, a higher wage elicits stronger student interest in the internship.
- Employers may not be required to pay minimum wage if the student is receiving course credit.
- Internship wages vary – research what is typical within your industry and geographic location – The CSU Career Center can provide you with competitive wage information.
- Workers Compensation – If the intern is paid or is volunteer (not receiving credit), the employer covers workers comp. If the intern is receiving credit and the CSU college requires workers comp then a document will be provided that indicates coverage through CSU.
- You may provide other incentives for student interns, also:
  - Scholarships based on performance; tuition reimbursement
  - Attend professional development seminars/workshops
  - Opportunity to conduct informational interviews with senior staff

### **Mentoring and supervision**

- Interns should feel like they are making a contribution
- Assign a mentor prior to the intern's start date
- Conduct periodic evaluations throughout the internship – provide feedback and guidance
  - Communicate evaluation results with each intern individually.
- Communicate with CSU Career Center or appropriate academic department about any key issues that should be addressed.
- Offer opportunity for interns to attend management and/or staff meetings
- Extracurricular activities (dinners, informal get-togethers, group volunteer opportunities) allow interns to feel valued and included and they providing invaluable networking opportunities
- Clearly communicate if the intern will be granted a continuation of the internship (for the upcoming semester or following summer) or if a full-time offer will be extended.

## **Partner with The Career Center to Hire your Intern(s)**

### **Market your internship opportunity**

- Post your internship opportunity on The Career Center's CareerRAM Job Posting system
- Advertise in CSU daily newspaper, *The Rocky Mountain Collegian*
- Participate in CSU career fairs and other Career Center sponsored events/activities
- Network with targeted academic departments; participate in/sponsor CSU student organizations

### **Conduct On-campus interviews**

- Utilize interview rooms available at The Career Center
- Use on-line CareerRAM system to communicate with the students regarding interview logistics - time, place, information session date/time, dress code, who they will be interviewing with (if known), etc.

### **Intern Selection**

- Clearly outline your selection process and timeframe with each student you interview
- Contact every student that you interview regarding his/her status in a timely fashion.
- If the student is offered an internship, clearly communicate the next steps – official offer letter, orientation logistics, start date, compensation, office location, length of internship, temporary housing/traveling expenses, assigned mentor (including contact information), etc.
- If not offered internships, please let students know; keep them 'warm' for potential future opportunities.

### **Further Information**

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