

Starting & Maintaining a Quality Internship Program

UW-La Crosse – Gail Beausoleil

Viterbo University – Beth Dolder-Zieke

Western Technical College – Barb Kelsey



Agenda

- What is an Internship?
- Legal Issues
- Roadblocks & Business Case for Internships
- 5 Steps to Developing Your Program
- Recruiting Interns
- An Employer's Perspective



What is an Internship?

in·tern *noun* \ 'in- , tərn\ *A professional in training*

- Integrates knowledge and theory learned in classroom
- Practical application and skill development in professional setting; supervised by site
- Full or part time; paid or unpaid
- Connection to educational institution and faculty; coincides with academic term
- Structured and deliberate learning objectives



Roadblocks to Buy In

- Only for large organizations
- One bad intern = never again
- Too many legalities
- We don't need one
- We can't afford one
- We don't have time
- Don't know how to set a program up



Building a Business Case

The Sales Pitch:

- Create workforce pipeline
- Bridge skills gap
- Groom future leadership
- Complete 'wish list' projects
- Return on investment



The Community Connection

Stay connected to colleges and the community

- Maintains connections with colleges and increases visibility on campus
- Promotes community involvement; excellent public relations tool
- Interns act as advocates in recruiting other students



What's the ROI?

Improved Retention:

- Within one year of hire, **nearly 86%** of former interns at the hiring organization are still on the job, compared with about 81% who didn't do an internship
- **Almost 40%** of employers reported a higher five-year retention rate among employees they'd hired from their internship programs



How Much Will This Cost?

Sample Cost Breakdown

- \$10/hour x 120 hours
- \$1200.00

Other Forms of Compensation

- Monthly stipend
- Freebies
- Gas cards + pizza



Viterbo Paid Internship Grant

- Great Lakes Community Investments
- \$441,000 – for financially needy students
- Through spring of 2017
- Funding for previously unpaid internships
- Experiences must “provide meaningful work experiences directly related to the student’s major or career goals”
- Up to 320 hours (20 hours/week); \$8 an hour
- Viterbo handles payroll



2015-18 CAREER READY
INTERNSHIP GRANT RECIPIENT



Legal Issues

- **Fair Labor Standards Act:** Workers must be compensated for the services they perform
- **DOL exemptions** to legally offer unpaid internships (in a nutshell):
 - Must be a **learning experience** for the student and not primarily a benefit for employer
 - Clearly defined **learning objectives/goals** related to the professional growth of the student's academic coursework
 - **Supervision and feedback** by a professional with expertise and educational or professional background in the field
 - There are **resources**, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals



Developing a Quality Program

Step 1: Create Work Plan

- What are your needs? Goals?
- What can an intern do?
 - Review job descriptions for each department
 - Identify capacity issues
 - Wish list projects



Work Plan

Marketing Internship

Length: June 1 – August 31, 2016

Supervisor:

Mentor:

Workspace:

Email address and phone number:

Rate of pay:

Projects:

- Research information for website
- Marketing Plan including demographic research
- Development and implementation of social media plan
- Website maintenance and development
- Assist with development of presentations for staff
- Attend Marketing Committee meetings
- Assist with event planning

Creating a Job Description

Step 2: Create a Job Description

Things to consider adding:

- Work times that **MUST** be staffed
- If work may land outside of normal 8-5
- Are hours flexible?
- Essential skills
- What areas would intern have exposure to?
- What “perks” may they expect?



Developing a Program

Step 3: Recruit and Hire Qualified Intern

- Anticipate posting 3-4 months out
- Local colleges or universities
- Employee referrals
- Interview, vet, & extend offer to chosen candidate
- Notify candidates who were not selected



Maintaining Your Program

Step 4: Manage the Intern

- Orientation-without overload
 - Mimic training for a full-time employee
 - Don't make assumptions
 - Talk about attire, perfume, schedule, etc.
- Give the intern resources needed to function
 - Access to server/share drive, passwords
 - Employee handbook
 - Who to go to for what



Best Practices

Step 5: Learn from Others:

- Offer interns real, meaningful assignments
- Supervisors must really WANT to supervise the intern
- Check in often
- Consider rotating among departments
- Offer shadowing opportunities
- Possibly have intern create or review an intern manual
- Conduct exit interviews

Remember, this is a learning experience for them



The Nuts and Bolts

- Contact the Career Services office for specifics
- Submit job description
- Employer agreement form
- Position will be posted on the job board
- Students apply; you choose the right fit for your org
- Students complete additional paperwork and may be registered for credits
- In many cases, there are mid-term and final evaluations you must complete



An Employer's Perspective

Karen Kouba

Senior HR Generalist

Trane, Inc.



Contact

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse:

Gail Beausoleil, Director of Career Services & Academic Advising
608.785.8517 | Gail.B@uwlax.edu

Viterbo University:

Beth Dolder-Zieke, Director of Career Services
608.796.3827 | bdzieke@viterbo.edu

Western Technical College:

Barbara Kelsey, Career Services Manager
608.789.6199 | KelseyB@westerntc.edu