

Seize Your Internship Opportunities

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It has been said that the true testament of a university is the caliber of student it produces.

Similarly, in the Disney movie, "The Newsies," newspaper salesmen chanted, "Open the gates and seize the day/Don't be afraid and don't delay/... Arise and seize the day." Besides attending classes, studying for tests, and preparing for projects and reports, you have opportunities to gain practical experiences in real-world settings and possibly get paid. These magical experiences are called internships.

With an increasingly competitive job market, companies are looking to hire individuals with educational knowledge and skills as well as practical experience. Internships not only make you more marketable after graduation, but also allow you to have deeper understanding of your major and possible career options available. These are great opportunities for you to stand out among other applicants and get your foot in the door. Connections made during these work experiences can help you land important and useful connections that can be used when job searching.

Besides gaining a great opportunity to perfect skills you have already obtained in class or through student organizations and leadership roles, internships allow you to polish the office communication skills of networking, public speaking, collaborating with peers, addressing everyday problems, and making valuable connections with colleagues. Using this time to also advance your knowledge of how offices work makes you a stronger student and future employee.

During your internship, you can also network with individuals in your desired field. It gives you the perfect environment to find a mentor. Mentors are great sources of information, with their personal stories of successes, professional connections, and ability to provide guidance as you progress along your career path. Allow them to assist you in your journey as you develop into a paraprofessional. These individuals also can serve as future references on job applications, so be aware that internships are doubly important and should not be treated lightly. Remember while working at your internship site to remain professional and treat it as you would a future, professional job.

If you are looking to "seize the day" and participate in an internship, there are many available options in your course of study. Your faculty and career counselors are two great resources available on campus to assist you in your search and in writing/editing your resume and cover letter. They are knowledgeable about internships opportunities and are willing to search with you!