INTERNS SPEAK:
WHAT WE LEARNED (AND DIDN'T) FROM OUR MUSEUM INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

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OUR RESEARCH TEAM:

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MUSEUM ON!
WHAT WE WILL DISCUSS

- What is an internship?
- Why should my museum offer internships?
- How do internships impact student learning?
- How can both museums and students facilitate best internship experiences?
WHAT IS AN INTERNSHIP?

Internships are:

• guided learning experiences.

• professional introductions to the field.

• mentored.

• goal-oriented.
ASOK, THERE'S NO NICE WAY TO SAY THIS...

DO THIS MINDLESS TASK FOR ME BECAUSE YOU'RE NOTHING BUT AN INTERN AND YOUR TIME HAS VERY LITTLE VALUE.

THERE PROBABLY WAS A NICE WAY TO SAY THAT.

IT DIDN'T JUMP OUT.
An internship is not:

- "free labor"
- entry-level positions
- busy work
- unstructured
WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE AN INTERNSHIP AT YOUR MUSEUM?
INTERNSHIPS...

• offer insight to the world of emerging professionals.

• allow trained staff to pass along the knowledge they’ve gained from on-the-job experience.

• are a crucial step in gaining future potential employees.

• contribute to your museum’s public value by providing leadership and professional training.
MUSEUM COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- experience
- connections

EMERGING PROFESSIONAL

- real world learning
- applied content

FACULTY

- support
- skilled workers

MUSEUM
INTERNSHIPS ARE:

- A structured work experience related to a student's major and/or career goal.
- An experience that enhances a student's academic career and personal development.
- Supervised by a professional in the field.
- Paid or unpaid, part-time or full-time.
WHAT ABOUT THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE MAKES IT “HIGH-IMPACT” LEARNING?

Internships demand students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks.

Internships provide students with rich and frequent feedback about their performance.

Internships help students apply and test what they are learning in new situations.
WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERNSHIPS?

- Offer real work assignments with support from staff
- Provide orientations/handbooks/website for interns
- Paid / compensated
- Allow flexible time and work arrangements
- Encourage team involvement
- Conduct exit interviews
When you host an unpaid internship, a unicorn is very, very sad.

from the blog NAF at:

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

• Legality
  ◦ know what is legal/not legal

• Experience doesn't pay the bills

• Be flexible with scheduling

• Offer other kinds of support

• Unpaid internships exclude many students and emerging professionals

• Unpaid internships decrease the quality of applicants

PAID INTERNSHIPS ARE IDEAL.
STUDENT DATA: REFLECTIVE EXPERIENCES AND EXAMPLES
LYNDI'S INTERNSHIP: FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE

- Archives Internship at Sioux City Public Museum
- Best practice Example: Flexible Schedule
  - Met total time requirement.
  - I chose my hours from museum’s open times.
  - Interns select times when they can be most productive.
  - Allowed another job, time with my family, and weekend trips WITHOUT compromising work experience.
ASHLEIGH'S INTERNSHIP:
REAL WORK ASSIGNMENTS

- Communications Internship with the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History
- Best Practice Example: Real Work Assignment
  - Social media and marketing.
  - Attending events in the community to take pictures.
  - Write for the museum newsletter.
JULIA'S INTERNSHIP:
ENCOURAGE TEAM INVOLVEMENT

- The Jasper County Historical Museum in Newton, IA
- Best Practice: Encourage Team Involvement
  - Board Meetings
  - Valued Opinion
  - Freedom to Collaborate
ALLISON'S INTERNSHIP:
PROVIDE ORIENTATION

- Distance internship working to create a collections management policy for Preston's Station in Belle Plaine, IA, while I was in Dubuque, IA

- Best practice Example: Provide Orientation
  - Dr. Lung provided orientation opportunity and ride to site.
  - Met site staff and helpful community members.
  - Human-object interaction, in-depth research materials.
  - Made personal connections with the staff I was working for and better understood better the collections I was working with.
NICOLE'S EXPECTATIONS:

I haven't had an internship yet but anticipate I will:

- Work close with a supervisor or professional in the field.
- Gain valuable knowledge and experience.
- Obtain exposure to the real world/professional environment.
- Build relationships and networks with professionals in leadership positions.
ASOK, YOU'VE BEEN SUCH A GOOD INTERN THAT I'VE DECIDED TO PROMOTE YOU.

YOUR NEW STATUS IS CALLED LIMBO. YOU WILL EXIST IN A PLANE BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DAMNED.

YES!!! I WILL EXIST!

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GREAT. IT WENT RIGHT TO HIS HEAD.
References and Resources:


Resources for the Museum Industry to Discuss the Issue of Unpaid Internships: https://www.aam-us.org/programs/resource-library/resources-for-the-museum-industry-to-discuss-the-issue-of-unpaid-internships/


A Legal Framework for Internships: https://www.fracturedatlas.org/site/blog/2013/08/14/avoiding-the-black-swan-part-ii/

SO YOU WANT TO GIVE YOUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AN ETHICAL MAKEOVER... https://incluseum.com/2016/02/18/internship-program-ethical-makeover/

5 Must-Dos for First-Time Intern Managers: https://www.themuse.com/advice/5-mustdos-for-firsttime-intern-managers


"When You Host an UNpaid Internship a Unicorn is Very, Very Sad" from the blog NAFot: https://nonprofitaf.com/2018/08/when-you-host-an-unpaid-internship-a-unicorn-loses-its-pancreas/