

## GETTING JUMP ON JOB MARKET AND GETTING PAID FOR IT

Reading the daily headlines can be depressing - especially if you are entering the job market for the first time. The last few years have seen shrinking opportunities for college graduates. At the same time, in an increasingly globalized society, expectations are greater for the new professional entering the work force. In a narrow, complex job market the graduate who can bring something substantive to the table stands the best chance of landing the job and succeeding.

One way to take charge of your professional future and to make yourself more competitive is to have some "real" experience on your resume. And if this experience takes place in one of the world's international "power" cities, the rewards can be even greater. Washington, D.C. is one such city, offering hundreds of internship opportunities.

The Institute for Experiential Learning (IEL) is one of several internship programs in Washington,

D.C. Dr. Mary Ryan, Executive Director of IEL, stresses "While you still have time to plan for the future, you want to take advantage of all the educational opportunities you can. In a tight job market, you need practical, on-site experience, because a background in the professional workplace gives you an edge in landing the right position after you graduate."

In addition to enhancing your resume and expanding your network of contacts, a successful internship can help you project more confidently in job interviews because you have something concrete to discuss. It allows you to experience first-hand the relationship of the public and private sector, and to get to know a diversity of people. Washington is an international city!

As one former student says, "Without this internship at IEL under my belt, my future job hunting would have been hit or miss. I now recognize the varying aspects of international relations and have narrowed down my interests." Still another, now applying

what she learned, believes that "The internship taught me several things one does not learn in standard classes in college. The video and film industries have a language all their own - a point which is overlooked in classroom exercises."

The IEL program, called the Capital Experience, is unique among Washington internship programs because it is academically based. Students generally can earn up to 17 credits for it. Designed to be a serious learning experience tailored to each student's needs and goals, it stresses close collaboration between the student, the on-campus faculty advisor, IEL staff and on-site sponsors. Individualized placements are made in a wide range of government agencies, businesses, professional offices and nonprofit organizations. Students, who come from around the world, formulate their own learning plans to guide their internships, spending four days a week at work and one day at IEL seminars, site visits, tours and briefings.

The combination of course work and the internship allows students to test how classroom theories are realized in practice. One IEL student says, "I think it was very useful to learn what to expect from a workplace atmosphere before I actually get into the situation in my future career. It brought to the textbook rules to life." Still another felt that she "matured and learned about myself by changing lifestyles from a college kid to a business professional," adding that "I expected to be doing 'gopher' work, but was pleasantly surprised that the work I was given to do was varied and interesting."

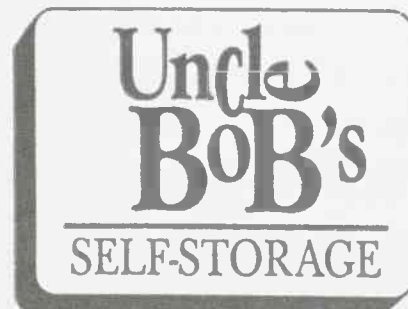
Carefully organized, serious internship programs offer students the opportunity to maximize their college years, and to gain the confidence and independence they need to succeed in a highly competitive job market. As IEL's Dr. Ryan asks, "Can you afford not to invest in your future?" For information, contact the Institute for Experiential Learning, 1325 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-3104 or call 800-IEL-0770.

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