

Internships provide needed experience for grads

Michelle Tremain
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Help wanted. Experience preferred.

It's a familiar Catch-22 for students looking for work after graduation.

Students need to get experience to get the job they want, but to get the job they want, they often need experience.

"It's no longer good enough for a student to graduate with good grades alone. They need experience, too," said Gina Frigault, director of the Student Resource Center at Avila College. "Employers want to know that you know what it's like in the field."

Some educational institutions are working with businesses to offer internship programs.

"We try to maximize their opportunities to gain experience, to give them as many options as possible," said Dana Leibengood, director of student services for the school of journalism and mass communications at the University of Kansas.

Students are encouraged, sometimes actively recruited, to complete an internship in their junior or senior year.

"It's really a tremendous opportunity for real exposure and networking. But also to get a good handle on the job and gain knowl-

edge of what actually goes on in the workplace," said Paul Williams, associate professor of history and chairman of the history department at Mid-America Nazarene University.

Students participating in internships have a lot to gain: hands-on experience, additional skills, professional references, as well



as networking.

"A strong case for doing an internship is to gain confidence in their own ability to work," Leibengood said. "For journalism and communications students, good samples of work are invaluable. In any case, it's good to have the confidence that they can do the job, have an idea what the job entails and also, if it's really what they want to do."

According to Williams, internships are becoming more available.

Internships vary from three to 10 weeks or longer.

Doing one isn't always just an option: In some fields, such as criminal justice, psychology and sociology, it is a requirement of the degree at Mid-America Nazarene University.

"One of the things that has changed over the years, in part because of our location, the proximity to Kansas City and Topeka, is year-round internships," Leibengood said.

Not too long ago, internships were typically limited to summer months, when students would be able to work full-time.

"We typically have three to four interns during a semester. Most work 10 to 15 hours a week," said Jodel Chen, a marketing communications manager with Smith & Loveless. For six years, the marketing communications company has worked with local universities to offer internships.

"We really consider it a win-win situation. When students come in, it's a very hands-on experience. When they leave our internship, they have a full portfolio," Chen said. "From our standpoint, they bring in fresh ideas and a level of energy that's nice. They are still in the classroom learning and gaining insight from professors and come in fresh."

"I think you get an opportunity to do real life work and see what's

involved in your field. It shows employers you have a bit of real world experience," said Ali Ketchum, a KU business communications major interning with Smith & Loveless.

Jodie Chester, a senior at KU who has completed one internship in Memphis and will be doing a second internship this summer in Philadelphia, recommends the extra training.

"It's a great thing to have on your resume. You get a chance to see how the organization is set up, the management styles, and how it all really works together."

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