Why are colleges and universities so obsessed with internships?

- Global concerns from students and parents regarding ROI of college investments
- Successful employment of graduates a critical concern for universities
- Internships are an easy pacifier – everyone loves them
- And hey, experiential learning is good too
- Let’s guarantee it
Way back in the days when the grass was still green and the pond was still wet and the clouds were still clean,
An Evolutionary History

The rise of the internship
The Transition 1950 to 1989

- No experience necessary
- Tenure in 1\textsuperscript{st} position: 4 to 5 years
- Companies did most of the training
- Large employer dominance in college market
The Transition Since Early 1990s

- Experience required
- Tenure in first position 12 to 24 months
- Most organizations provide little or no training
- Skills & expectations have soared (employers)
- Large employers are no longer dominant
Current College Labor Market

- Improving better than US labor market
  - Unemployment among 20 - 25 year olds with college degree remains high

- All majors are in play
  - Skills are more important than academic major

- BUT the market is highly competitive
  - Job growth versus total demand

Source: Philip Gardner, Collegiate Employment Research Institute, Michigan State University
Students are not competitive
UNLESS they...

- Have the necessary pre-professional experiences
- Engage in a high stake internship
- Fluently articulate skills developed through experiences
What Counts?

- Internships
  - Leadership in a professional organization
  - Faculty supervised applied research project with company
- Study Abroad
  - Supervised civic engagement
- Leadership in a non-professional organization
- Scholarly research with faculty
- International Internship
Introducing

The High-Stakes Internship
Internships must be demanding and challenging both for the intern and the employer
- No trial runs or practice – real professional stakes; real consequences
- Must be valued in the organization

Student has to have some clarity about their professional direction and skills they need to develop

Deep reflection (pre, during, and post)
Length of internship is critical to develop boundary spanning skills
It’s all about skills
It’s ALL about skills. Really!

- Developing professional competencies
- Communicating effectively
- Solving problems
- Balancing work and life
- Embracing change
- Working effectively in a team
- Working in a diverse environment
- Managing time & priorities
- Navigating across boundaries
- Acquiring knowledge
- Thinking critically
- Performing with integrity

http://careernetwork.msu.edu/award-winning-media
Skill Usage: The Funnel

Apply learning
Write effectively
Work in teams
Grasp workplace realities
Acquire information
Demonstrate initiative

Communicate orally
Think analytically
Acquire knowledge
Evaluate alternatives
Create solutions
Innovate
Work in teams
Lead as necessary
Utilize technology
Grasp workplace realities
Demonstrate initiative
Key Competencies at a much Higher Level!

- Build working relationships
- Analyze, evaluate and interpret data
- Engage in continuous learning
- Communicate through justification and persuasion
- Plan and manage a project
- Create new knowledge
- Seek global understanding
What skills do employers value from employees who have studied or interned abroad?

**Skill Group #1**
All clustered in the 50% range of employer selections
- Interacting with people who hold different interests, values &/or perspectives (60%)
- Understanding cultural differences in the workplace (53%)
- Adapting to situations of change (50%)

**Skill Group #2**
All clustered in the 30-45% range of employer selections
- Gaining new knowledge from experiences
- Being able to establish priorities
- Ability to work independently
- Working effectively with others
- Resourcefulness in undertaking unfamiliar tasks

The T-Shaped Professional

Boundary Crossing Competencies
Teamwork, communication, perspective, networks, critical thinking, global understanding, project management, etc.

Many Disciplines
Understanding & communications

ME

Many Systems
Understanding & communications

Deep in at least one discipline
Analytic thinking & problem solving

Adaptive innovators

Deep in at least one system
Analytic thinking & problem solving

Jim Spohrer
IBM Labs
Everyone knows you “thneed” an internship...

Quality reflective learning and professional preparation
Reflective Learning Model

LEARNING CATALYSTS
- Academic courses
- Internships, co-ops, practica, service
- Leadership experiences
- Study abroad
- Life events & relationships

REFLECTION
- Self awareness
- Skill identification
- Critical thinking
- Decision-making
- Learning

INTEGRATION
- Skill development
- Problem solving
- Transition awareness
- Ability to contribute

The Problem with “Reflection”

- Reflection panacea in pedagogy – not all reflection is good reflection
- Students are faking it - exercise in rhetoric for the evaluators sake
- An academic exercise – not real
- Lack of integration between the experience abroad and their academic and professional world at home
“They loved living here. But I can’t let them stay. They’ll have to find food. And I hope that they may.”
Clarify Ideas
Follow your curiosity and identify your interests.

Remove The Blocks
Wonder “how I can” rather than “I can’t because...”

Expect The Unexpected
Be prepared for chance opportunities, such as unexpected phone calls, chance encounters, impromptu conversations and new experiences.

Take Action
Learn, develop skills, remain open and follow-up on chance events.

Source: http://plannedhappenstance.com/aboutus.html
# The Student as Learning Architect

## PACKING
- Provides a holistic structure for student expectations
- Provides a context for setting learning goals
- Challenges students to identify learning opportunities
- Sets an expectation for learning in nearly every setting

## UNPACKING
- Provides a context for student reflection
- Creates an opportunity to assess learning
- Challenges students to identify personally meaningful learning experiences
- Fosters integrated thinking and professional articulation of competencies
“The questions we ask determine where our thinking goes.”

~Michael Scriven and Richard Paul
Ask contextually meaningful questions for professional preparation

- Builds awareness of the learning process in professional settings
- Stimulates critical thinking and comparative analysis
- Advances integration of student learning and professional development
  - Asking *why* and *how* helps connect the dots!
DEAL Model
Modified from Patti Clayton, PHC Ventures

Engage in experience

Describe experience objectively

Examine per category

Personal growth
Professional growth
Specific skills
Cultural understanding

Articulate learning

Modified from Clayton, P (2010) PHC Ventures
Establish a context for student reflection relative to their future life plans (i.e. employment field, graduate school).

Ask questions that provoke students to make connections. Why? How?

Use a novice approach. Ask questions to build your understanding or technical competence in the field.

Push the envelope. Students make important realizations and associations when they stretch their limits.
UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not. —The Lorax
Why aren’t international internships valued more by employers?

- Negative perceptions of study abroad – its one big party right?
- Faculty outsourcing their responsibilities to study abroad and third party providers
- Little to no engagement from career services professionals
- Lack of direction and integration to their discipline and professional preparation
- Timing – too short, part-time, left to last semester
Big claims but little quality evidence as to the assets and outcomes of international internships

Most international education assessment tools do not specifically include career related indices

Need for a global research agenda on international internships
  - Elusive data sets, too segmented, too little employer data
  - Consistency demands a more collaborative and boundary spanning approach
Thoughts, Questions, Research Ideas, Calls to Action

Discussion
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