

Internships and Career Research Paper Deadline April 1, 2010

The Internships and Careers Interest Group (ICIG) seeks research paper submissions from both faculty and students for the 2010 AEJMC national convention in Denver. Papers may be on any topic related to internships and careers in communications.

ICIG welcomes research from a variety of methodologies and perspectives including surveys, experiments and content analyses. Themes from research papers presented at past conferences cover a range of topics including the use of internship supervisor evaluations for program assessment, the perceptions of students regarding the value of internships and intern versus employer internship expectations.

At least one author of any accepted paper must be available to present the paper at the Denver convention. Student submissions must be identified as such. For multiple-authored papers, all authors must be students to qualify as a student paper.

Authors must remove any and all identifying

information from their papers. Identifying information is entered in the online database only. Any paper submitted with the author's identifying material visible on any page will be disqualified. Any recognized research method and citation style may be used, and all text and supporting materials should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages. Papers that have been previously presented or published, that are currently being considered for publication, or that have been submitted to another AEJMC division are not eligible.

All papers must be submitted through the AEJMC on-line process and submitted by deadline. Please see the 2010 AEJMC Uniform Call for Papers for submission instructions. All submissions must adhere to all AEJMC submission guidelines to receive full consideration. Hard copy papers or papers submitted electronically to the research chair will not be accepted.

For questions, contact the ICIG research chair: Kim McDonough at kmm@iastate.edu.

Denver Programming Finalized

By John Chapin, ICIG Vice Head

At press time, ICIG's programming for the Denver Convention is finalized (except for the paper competition).

We ask that you plan to attend the members meeting on Aug. 5 if you are interested in being an ICIG officer next year. With current officers ending their terms, new members are needed. We will also need readers for the 2011 convention.

Pre-conference Sessions

Tuesday, August 3

5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Internship Issues

Part One: Approaches to Assessment

Are students prepared for the demands of their internships and for the ever-changing demands of the workplace? The panel will consist of faculty members, internship coordinators, and administrators from big and small programs. Panelists will discuss approaches to assessment within their programs, with an emphasis on challenges and opportunities.

Part Two: Virtually Interning: Challenges for students, faculty and staff

The rise of social media and the explosion of self-publishing entities on the Web have led to a new horizon in the world of field experience: The Virtual Internship. These non-office based working and learning experiences offer tremendous opportunities balanced by significant risks.

Students who are geographically isolated have significant new opportunities. Class schedules no longer hamper students who want to work in news or public relations writing, or video editing. The digital environment allows them to work on their own time and in their own location. But the landscape has become littered with virtual "offers" of internships. How can faculty, internship professionals and students discern "authentic" opportunities from poor quality ones? How can faculty adequately supervise students in the field experiences without walls? Will the traditional means of academic quality control give way to new metrics in the virtual world? Who, if anyone, is creating a model for successful virtual internships?

Wednesday, August 4

8:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

(ICIG/CCJA) Teaching

Preparing Students for What's Next in Student Media

1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

(CCJA/ICIG) Teaching

Preventive Medicine: Don't wait for your journalism program to get cancelled before you throw it a lifeline

Thursday, August 5

11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

(RTVJ/ICIG) PF&R

The State of the Industry: 2010

3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

(ICIG/RTVJ) Teaching

The Problems That Won't Go Away: Grammatical and quantitative competence in journalism students

5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

(ICIG) Research

The Best of ICIG: Refereed Paper Competition

6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

(ICIG)

Members Meeting

Friday, August 6

12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

(ICIG) Research

Scholar to Scholar

1:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

(ICIG/CCJA) PF&R

Preparing Students to Succeed on Camera, Online and in Print

3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

(ICIG/SPIG) PF&R

Make Your Own Internship: 21st century alternatives for students looking to make their mark

Saturday, August 7

7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

COD Business Meeting

8:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Training for incoming officers

Five Questions about “Virtual Internships”

By Gerry McNulty, ICIIG Teaching Standards Chair

As a Baby Boomer, I remember there were too many of us and not enough of anything at school – not enough desks, not enough classrooms, not enough books. But life is so different for my students. They are preparing to enter a media world in flux, a world in which their desk could be their lap, their books are run by batteries and their classroom is the Internet. One extension of this new world is the “virtual” or remote internship.

There are many advantages to virtual internships: students can avail themselves of opportunities they would otherwise be denied by geography; students can flex their schedules and maximize possibilities with a particular employer, students can work in their pajamas! Who really goes to work in their pajamas? We can debate the virtues of remote work all we want, or we can accept it for what it is – a growing reality. The rise of powerful telecommunication networks has created a new landscape. Simply, this is the workplace of the next generation.

Yet it is important to keep in mind that this new horizon is just that – new and unmapped. Just as students are learning the ropes, so, too are employers seeking to define the best protocols and procedures to get the job done. We’ve all read and heard the pitches from employers eager to scoop up our students. Here is one magazine’s pitch:

“...3 credit internship usually consists of you writing ten articles of at least 1,000 words over 10 weeks for a total of at least 10,000 original words written. You can skip a week or two if your school schedule gets busy so do not worry about writing for 10 straight weeks if that concerns you.”

I don’t know about you, but when I was a student if an employer had pitched those terms to me (do not worry about writing for 10 straight weeks...), I would have signed on in a hurry. But we know something our students don’t: not every opportunity is worthwhile. As internship coordinators, we need to look out for the interests of our students. We need to teach them to temper their inclinations to jump at internship offers that sound, as the old saying goes, too good to be true. Finally, we need to stand up and demand high quality field experience opportunities, distinguishing them from

among the crush of offers that are already bombarding job boards on the Internet.

So, to ensure that my students have an enriching learning opportunity, I’ve resolved to ask these five questions before approving a virtual internship:

1. Why is the student choosing a virtual internship?

Is it because she thinks it would be “cool” to work from home, from her dorm? Is it because she thinks it will be easier than the traditional workplace, with its travel time and expense, with its many new faces, with its office politics? Is it because she’s squeezing in 1 more upper level course in order to graduate and the virtual internship is the only way she can add field experience to her schedule? Or is it because she has developed superior social networking skills and, in fact, can communicate as well – or better – via electronic tools than they can in person?

2. Has the student mastered the basic survival skills needed in the virtual or remote workplace?

While the typical intern may “feel” alone as he sits in a newsroom, he is, of course, hardly so. If he’s tasked to gather facts to update a breaking news story there are veteran staffers sitting at his elbow to depend upon for help and guidance. The intern may not realize how much he learns simply observing what is going on around him, not to mention from the instant advice they blurt out. This opportunity is not afforded the virtual intern, he works on his own, he learns by trial and error. Inherent in this discussion is the need for the student to have mastered socialization skills, time management and other organizational skills. All of those are skills most of us learned in an office setting – how to file and store research for future projects, how to manage our time wisely, how to find out what the boss really wants. Now our students must learn them on their own. Somehow. It’s our job to make sure students are aware of these demands and aware of their own skill levels.

3. How prepared is the employer to properly support remote workers?

Does the company have other virtual employees? Does it have a policy in place that governs work hours, deadlines? Does it train its supervisors in how to deal

with e-communication many limitations? We all know about Skype, but the reality is email becomes the default form of communication. Missing from email is voice inflection, body language, word emphasis and many other clues that help us all to understand what is going on around us? We should not allow our students to sign on with employers who don't have very clearly worded procedures for how virtual employees should do their jobs. We should not endorse work with employers that do not have a formal structure in place for regular and valuable feedback.

4. What will the student learn through a virtual internship?

Students are often eager to try new things. Employers can sometimes be too welcoming of students who want to 'help out' with content production and management. But we must be the arbiters, we must ask the hard questions to ensure that a virtual internship carries with it measurable and valuable learning opportunities. Most of the virtual internship offers seem to be in journalism, public relations and advertising areas. That said, how does this virtual internship compare to traditional ones? Are there better, worse, or simply different learning opportunities in this arrangement? Is there a substantial amount of work, is there a clear delineation of responsibility, are there support procedures in place? Will the student actually benefit from this, or is a traditional placement better?

5. Who will bear the ultimate responsibility for success or failure in this work-without-walls arrangement?

As educators, we are tasked with finding a high quality internship placement, with monitoring the student throughout the internship and with guiding the student's reflection. But virtual internships throw out the old model, the one we are all used to. In that old model we could count on the student to be surrounded by other employees, to be able to observe on a regular basis, to be able to network with a variety of younger and older employees, to be given feedback by a supervisor, to gauge the students 'attendance' in a face to face world. When we remove all or many of those forms of feedback, we should anticipate that students will need more help, more guidance and probably more feedback from their

faculty supervisors. It will be a learning process for faculty and staff, too. We will need to learn by trial and error, learn to report our findings and then review the research. And just as it was the first time around, it will be the job of the educators to make sure education happens. We need to remember that. We should not let our students get too carried away with their digital daydreams and we should not let employers dictate terms in this new world of, Internship 2.0, unless those terms serve the purpose of education.

Gerry McNulty is the Director of the Communication Internship Program and an Assistant Professor at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. He has supervised more than 2,400 students in domestic and international internships since 1996. He is a former Associated Press correspondent and longtime newspaper editor.

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Do you have information that you would like us to include in a future issue of the ICIG Newsletter? We are looking for articles, book reviews, tips and advice about internship and careers. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Kim McDonough, ICIG Newsletter Editor.

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