

## **Internships – An Untapped Resource**

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Currently, we have just over 1,000 interns working at less than 400 companies in the region. Given the many advantages of hiring an intern, for our students and our businesses, we all need to embrace internships at every level to accelerate the diversification of our economy, while preparing our students for the real world. **U.S. News and world report wrote**, “University officials and employers almost universally maintain that partaking in an internship or several, sets a student apart from his or her peers even more and is integral to finding meaningful employment.”

**Why is the intern experience good for the student?** There are so many reasons students are looking for intern opportunities. Most pay something close to minimum wage, but the opportunity to gain real work experience is substantial. The students get to explore their career interests while simultaneously acquiring knowledge of the field, industry and potential employer. They also build their soft, non-technical skills such as communication and leadership, enhance their resume, and gain a real advantage over non-internship peers when it comes time to apply for jobs upon graduation. “These internships give these students an edge that they would not have otherwise,” says Patricia Cormier, president of Longwood University in Virginia, *which requires an internship of all graduates*. “If you're going to position your students to succeed, you've got to give them this exposure before they graduate.”

**Why is the intern experience good for the company?** When an employer is trying to improve organizational efficiency and profitability how can they affect a positive change? One way is to ensure that new employees are knowledgeable and efficient in what they bring to the workplace. Employers can also try to augment their workforce with knowledgeable, energetic part-time staff. A third way to ensure that their workforce remains fresh with new ideas and faces. Interns can be the answer to all three of these positive driving forces. Additionally, an employer gets to see an intern in action. Did the intern show up for “work” on time? Did the intern demonstrate proficiency in the job they are assigned? Did the intern show initiative? These are the kinds of questions an employer would love to have answered before they hire a new employee. So, if the employer is impressed by the intern and a job opens up, guess who’s going to get an offer?

**It is time we made internships a priority.** If you are one of the 8,000 businesses (including non-profits and local governments) that have not made hiring interns part of your HR strategy you may want to get on board. Attracting talent to your business, in this increasingly competitive job market, is an essential step to your organization’s survival.

To sign up for an intern contact Elizabeth Loun at UNR Career Studio: [Eloun@unr.edu](mailto:Eloun@unr.edu); Marcie Iannacchione at TMCC [miannacchione@tmcc.edu](mailto:miannacchione@tmcc.edu) or Dana Ryan at WCSD