GRINNELL COLLEGE

Alumni Mentor's Guide to Externships

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Introduction

Thank you for participating in the Grinnell College Externship Program. Your organization will benefit from this experience by including a bright, inquisitive student with working staff. The Grinnell College Extern is a liberal arts student with writing, analytical, and research skills. Students who have chosen to participate in the Externship Program are interested and motivated to learn from a career exploration experience.

These students are typically first and second year students who are deciding about their major and/or career path. Students gain an understanding of how their academic preparation can be used in work settings and also get a glimpse of the extent of their knowledge and skills. They gather information and perspectives that are helpful in making career choices and/or planning for graduate or professional education.

The campus community also reaps benefits from the Externship Program. Students return to campus with new experiences and perspectives about career exploration and development as well as industry knowledge that can be shared with their peers and instructors.

Thank you so much for your investment in Grinnell College students and your fellow future alumni,

Kelly Guilbeau
Internship Counselor
Grinnell College Center for Careers, Life, and Service

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Responsibilities of the Extern

Our expectation is that participating students will be motivated and interested in learning about your experiences as an undergraduate student, how those prepared you for the workplace, the details of your position and employer, and how to balance life and work. We expect our students to be as conscientious in attendance and work assignments as a regular employee. If the Extern misses any days, please contact the Center for Careers, Life, and Service (641-269-4940) so that problems may be resolved immediately.

For your information, prior to beginning their externships, our students participate in a mandatory orientation workshop series. In addition, they are required to meet with a career counselor in the Career Development Office upon the completion of their externship. We expect our students to act responsibly in the following ways:

At the Externship Site:

- Treat the externship as a serious responsibility and professional opportunity to learn;
- Re-evaluate and discuss learning goals as the externship progresses;
- Dress appropriately;
- Be punctual and reliable;
- Communicate regularly with their Alumni Mentor;
- Notify their Alumni Mentor, in advance, of any changes as soon as possible; and
- Notify the Center for Careers, Life, and Service (641-269-4940) should the circumstances of the externship change.

During the Externship Assignment:

- Complete all externship assignments and communicate with Grinnell College staff as outlined during the orientation session.

Regarding the Externship Work Schedule:

- Externs must be scheduled at least 3-5 days during their school breaks.

Role of the Alumni Mentor

We hope that the externship will prove to be a rewarding experience for you as well as the student. Please let us know how we can assist in making this a meaningful experience for both of you. Listed below are some specific recommendations on how to use your time together. Of course feel free to stray from the ideas listed; these are merely suggestions if you need them.

Prior to the Externship:

- Clarify what is expected of the Extern with respect to dress and confidentiality of certain information.

Time with You:

- Give the Extern a tour of the office and introduce him/her to the people with whom he/she will be working.
- Explain the mission, goals, functions, services and procedures of your organization/agency as well as your department and its relationship to the larger organization or profession.
- Share your story as a Grinnell alum. What was your Grinnell experience like? How did you pick your major, classes, campus involvement, internships, research, etc.? What has your career path been since you left Grinnell? What/who has helped you along the way? What are some things that you are glad you did and wish you would've done?
- Discuss the field/industry and how a student can start gaining experience and one day find a job in this field.
- Explain to the Extern how you make decisions—what the alternatives are and how you arrive at conclusions.
- Discuss with the Extern the specific duties and projects on which he/she will be working and explain how these projects fit into the larger picture and goals of your organization/agency.
- Throughout the externship, meet regularly with the Extern to discuss his/her work and learning and any new questions.

Time with Colleagues:

- Set up several 20-45min appointments or meetings for the Extern to do informational interviews with your co-workers in different positions to discuss their career path, how a college student can gain experience in this field, how someone pursues this career after graduation, etc.
- Ensure that Extern has time to discuss similar things with entry level employees.

Time with Leadership:

- Set up a 20-45mins appointments or meetings for the Extern to do informational interviews with those in leadership, if possible, to discuss their career path, how a college student can gain experience in this field, how someone pursues this career after graduation, the bigger picture of the office and mission/vision, etc.

Time with Materials:

- Share with the Extern the job descriptions of co-workers and an organizational chart for the organization/agency if appropriate.

- Introduce the Extern to brochures, manuals, reports, and/or journals pertinent to the organization/agency and to the field.

Time to Observe:

- Give the Extern an opportunity to attend staff, committee, public or legislative meetings.
- Sit in with clients meetings (when applicable and appropriate).

Role of the Center for Careers, Life, and Service

Coordination:

The Center for Careers, Life, and Service acts as a liaison with all those involved in the externship. The CLS will:

- Meet with students to identify and clarify externship goals as well as externship expectations;
- Monitor the Extern's progress;
- Solicit evaluations from the Extern and Alumni Mentor;
- Hold mandatory student orientation sessions covering administrative details and techniques for learning from an experiential education program; and
- Maintain communication between the Extern and Alumni Mentor.

In Conclusion:

The Center for Careers, Life, and Service will maintain communication with the externship site and clarify Grinnell College policies and procedures; maintain the confidentiality of any information obtained about the externship site; certify the Extern's academic eligibility to participate in an externship assignment; establish guidelines and standards for the Externship Program and make these guidelines and standards available to the externship site; enforce any additional rules and procedures that are mutually agreed upon in advance in writing between Grinnell College and the externship site.

Questions, problems, or suggestions should be directed to the Center for Careers, Life, and Service (641-269-4940).

Alumni Mentor Evaluation of Student Extern & Externship Program

An electronic evaluation will be emailed to you prior to the externship. This evaluation will cover the student's performance as well as the Externship Program itself. As previously mentioned, students participate in the Externship Program in order to explore and learn more about a particular career and how their interests do or do not align with it. Thus, your evaluation will largely focus on the student's attitude, character, and level of engagement in this learning process. ***Please complete and share the evaluation with your Extern before departure.***

Additionally, as this is still a fairly young program, the evaluation will also cover your experience with the Externship Program. This will help us make the program better in the future. ***Please complete and electronically submit the full evaluation by Saturday, March 29, 2014.***

COLLEGE/AGENCY MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING

Grinnell College Externship Program

I. Purpose. The Grinnell College Externship Program provides an educational strategy whereby students complement their academic preparation with direct practical experience. The effort to combine a productive work experience with an intentional learning component is a proven method for promoting the academic, personal, and career development of students. Your participation in the Grinnell College Externship Program by sponsoring students exhibits your interest and commitment to this educational strategy and to the growth and development of students as future professionals. We look forward to collaborating with externs in this work/learning endeavor.

II. Responsibilities. To help ensure the interests and promote the benefits of an externship arrangement for all parties involved, the College has developed this Memorandum of Understanding to describe the mutual responsibilities between the College and your organization hereafter named as Agency.

A. Responsibilities of the College

1. Encourage the student's productive contribution to the overall mission of the Agency;
2. Certify the student's academic eligibility to participate in an externship assignment;
3. Establish guidelines and standards for the conduct of its Externship Program and to make these guidelines and standards available to the Agency;
4. Maintain communication with the Agency and clarify Grinnell College policies and procedures;
5. Maintain the confidentiality of any information obtained about the Agency;
6. Enforce any additional rules and procedures that are mutually agreed upon in advance in writing between the Grinnell College and the Agency.

B. Responsibilities of the Agency

1. Encourage and support the learning aspect of the student's externship assignment;
2. Designate an employee to serve as student adviser with responsibilities to help orient the student to the Agency and its culture;
3. Provide adequate supervision for the student and to provide experiences that are career-related;
4. Make available equipment, supplies, and space necessary for the student to perform his/her duties;
5. Provide safe environment in which to observe and learn;
6. Notify College personnel of any changes in the student's status, schedule, or performance;
7. Provide written appraisals of the student’s performance (forms to be provided by the Grinnell College Externship Program, by the end of the student’s externship assignment);
8. Communicate Agency policies and standards to College personnel;

III. Terms Externship Arrangement. An externship arrangement for each student will be for a period agreed upon by the Agency and Grinnell College. In the event that the Agency is dissatisfied with the performance of a student, termination of the externship arrangement may be requested by the Agency, but only after College personnel have been notified in advance and a satisfactory resolution cannot be obtained. Conversely, the College may request termination of the externship arrangement for any student not complying with College guidelines and procedures for the externship program, as long as Agency personnel have been notified in advance and satisfactory resolution cannot be obtained.

Any questions regarding the Externship Program, its procedures, or this memorandum should be referred to the Grinnell College Center for Careers, Life, and Service, 1127 Park Street, Grinnell, IA 50112, (641) 269-4940.