

ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTERNSHIPS DIFFER FROM TRADITIONAL BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT INTERNSHIPS: A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION¹

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ABSTRACT

The nature of a regular internship versus an entrepreneurship internship is different relative to the level of commitment required of an organization. An entrepreneurship internship program faces unique challenges and embodies fundamental differences in objectives as compared to traditional business internship programs, especially if it is part of a comprehensive undergraduate major in entrepreneurship. However, undergraduate students tend to initially adopt a traditional job search methodology and mindset, which requires realignment to one that is, ironically, more entrepreneurial.

How does the intern know what it is really like to “walk a mile in the entrepreneur’s shoes?” Using a case methodology, we provide an answer to this question. We describe the efforts of one of the authors to develop and grow an existing internship program at a regional university in the Southeast. This paper discusses insights gained through implementing the undergraduate entrepreneurship intern program at one institution, and provides a framework for other institutions that may wish to explore or implement an entrepreneurship internship program of their own. We conclude with observations on the implications of this study as well as a brief commentary on future research.

Introduction

Upon joining the faculty in August of 2004, one of the authors of this paper was asked to serve as Program Coordinator of the Entrepreneurship Intern Program. An internship is “controlled experiential learning where a student receives academic credit while employed by an organization in a chosen area of interest” (Stretch & Harp, 1991, p. 67). The Entrepreneurship Internship Program is organized under the university’s Entrepreneurial Studies Program, which offers both a major and a minor in entrepreneurship.

“Experience continues to be one of the key attributes any entry-level professional can offer a prospective employer, and internships provide one of the best ways for the ambitious to obtain it” (Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000, p. 45). In short, internships often lead to jobs (Cannon, & Arnold, 1998). Because internships offer employers a low risk, try-before-you-buy proposition. Employers can find talent fairly cheaply or even for free (Clark, 2003). Internships also create linkages and dialogue between faculty and members of the business community, which have been increasingly identified as highly desirable (Pearce, 1992). Many employers have embraced internships as a valuable recruitment tool (Schmutte, 1985; Cannon, & Arnold, 1998). Based upon initial briefings, it was established that the entrepreneurship internship had

¹ We adopt the Gartner definition that “Entrepreneurship is the creation of new organizations” (1988, p. 26).

been formally organized and was a program of study requirement for entrepreneurship majors. A one course release (from a 4/4 normal teaching load) was also granted in the first semester of employment, during which the coordinator “ramped up” to service students and employers by developing a website and making initial contacts with businesses and community leaders. Course requirements, student and employer enrollment forms, internship performance evaluations (completed by employers), and additional guidelines were already firmly established and approved by the University’s administration.

However, in previous instances some students had sought to circumvent the internship course requirement by requesting a course substitution. Further, it was suggested that a dedicated faculty member who was qualified and able to acquire and maintain relationships within the business community was necessary in order to ensure the growth of the Entrepreneurship Internship Program. One of the reasons that students had attempted to substitute courses was that the process of determining a possible internship site depended on individual contacts with various faculty who had cultivated contacts with members in the business community; however, a list had not been formally developed and housed in a centralized location. Essentially, a “point person,” i.e., someone who would serve as a formally assigned liaison to connect students with employers was needed if the Entrepreneurship Program was to be developed to its full potential.

Using a case methodology, we describe the efforts of one of the authors to develop and grow an existing internship program. In the second section, we briefly describe the extant literature with an emphasis on literature about student internships. This review briefly covers literature on entrepreneurship education in the U.S. in order to provide the proper context for the internship. The third section presents our research method, followed by our case study of the Entrepreneurship Internship Program. The fifth section discusses the process that was used to grow a student internship program at a regional university in the southeast, and the final section offers observations on the implications of this study as well as a brief commentary on future research.

Literature Review

The literature on entrepreneurship education is still in a developmental stage (Fiet, 2001). This conclusion is startling when one considers just how far entrepreneurial phenomena have come in the last thirty years. Katz recently demonstrated that interest in entrepreneurship in colleges and universities has been nothing short of incredible. The growth rate has been phenomenal with more than 1,600 colleges and universities offering at least one course in entrepreneurship in the U.S. today.

Entrepreneurship education has been evaluated from a variety of perspectives including what is taught, why it is taught, how it is taught, and how well it works (see Gorman and Hanlon, 1997; Vesper and Gartner, 1997; Solomon, Winslow, and Tarabishy, 1998). The problem with assessing entrepreneurship education is that no generally accepted pedagogical model has been adopted in the U.S. or Europe (Solomon, et. al. 1998). Given that some researchers suggest that the “concept of entrepreneurship is inadequately defined [, and] this lack of a clear entrepreneurship paradigm poses problems for both policy makers and for academics” (Carton,

Hofer, and Meeks, 1998, p.1 of 11), the state of entrepreneurial education cannot be too surprising. If we cannot agree on the phenomena we are discussing, it becomes very difficult to develop a curriculum or build an academic program based upon those phenomena.

Solomon, et al. (2002), discussed the results of a twenty-year investigation of teaching entrepreneurial education and small business management in the U.S. Their data is based upon six national surveys. They believe a trend exists toward greater integration of practical applications and technology in entrepreneurial education. They note that new venture creation, small business management, and small business consulting remain the most popular courses in the field. However, they do not spend significant time discussing student internships.

Internships. Most of the research on pedagogical issues in entrepreneurship education has focused on small business consulting and business plan writing (Solomon, et al, 2002). Rather than attempt an exhaustive review of past research, this section will emphasize research relevant to internships, a form of active learning that has not been well investigated by researchers.

The literature on student internships in business has evaluated several perspectives, such as, but not limited to legal issues (Swift and Russell, 1999), extent of internships among colleges (Coco, 2000), academic content (Cannon and Arnold, 1998; Clark, 2003), and student perceptions (Cook, et al, 2004). Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the articles on internships and internship programs are written by faculty based upon their observations (Rothman, 2007). Their research emphasizes suggestions to host companies about supervision (Coco, 2000), work assignments (Tacket, Wolf and Law, 2001), as well as other issues, such as legal considerations (Swift and Russell, 1999).

Most of the literature agrees that student internships have many benefits. Cook et al (2004) completed a study of students that participated in student internships and found that most of them found the experience to be a positive learning experience. In a study of 242 schools, Coco (2000) found 92% of the participating schools had internships. Gault, Redington and Schlager (2000) found a link between internships and the recruiting efforts of business. They also found that students who had internships were able to find employment faster and at higher starting salaries than students that had not had internships. While the pragmatic benefits are fairly obvious, the educational value of internships is less obvious to some observers (Clark, 2003). In response to this cynicism, Clark (2003) discussed the attempt at the University of Idaho to provide students a menu of academic assignments to enhance the internship experience. Interestingly, Cannon and Arnold (1998) believe the opposite is true. They found that students use internships to enhance their job searches. They go on to suggest that business schools should require less writing, fewer exams, and less outside reading and add funding to increase the quantity and quality of internships.

While most of the literature emphasizes the benefits of internships, some authors have noted some drawbacks to internships. For example, Hite and Bellizzi (1986) said that some students may become disappointed in their internships if the programs are not well thought out. Scott (1992) pointed out that internships can be costly to employers that are seeking a return on their investment, while Swift and Russell (1999) noted that legal issues must be addressed to reduce the legal liability of the university.

Perhaps one of the surprising findings about the extant literature is the failure to address firm size when discussing business internships. While the literature does not explicitly state that business students in more traditional management programs are only assigned to large or medium-sized companies, neither does it explicitly address the issues associated with assigning a student to a small or entrepreneurial firm. Clearly, the size of the business has a bearing on the work climate and the expectations that the supervisor may have of the student. More importantly, given the evidence that exists about the growth of programs in entrepreneurship and small business in the U.S. (Solomon, et al, 2002; Katz, 2003), it seems important for researchers to address this gap in the literature on internships by discussing issues related to creating an internship program dedicated to entrepreneurial internships. Indeed, even when seasoned professionals transition from large organizations and start, or attempt to start (sometimes reluctantly, as a result of downsizing) a small entrepreneurial firm, they may flounder; at best, they report vast differences in the nature of big corporate life, as compared to entrepreneurial life.

Research Method

The challenge of conducting research about entrepreneurship education is that no generally accepted pedagogical model has been adopted in the U.S. or Europe (Solomon et al., 2002). This assertion suggests that entrepreneurship education is still in the exploratory stage (Gorman and Hanlon, 1997). Thus, our choice of a research design was influenced by the limited theoretical knowledge researchers have of entrepreneurial education (Fiet, 2001). In such a situation, it is appropriate to use a qualitative research method in order to gather the necessary information (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). The current research necessitated that we observe the process of assigning students to entrepreneurship internships. Thus, we adopted a qualitative research method described by Audet and d'Amboise (1998) which was broad-minded and flexible. Like their study, our aim was "to combine rigor, flexibility and structure without unduly restricting our research endeavor" (Audet and d'Amboise, 1998, p. 11). We start by describing background information about a regional university in the southeast U.S. Then, we discuss how entrepreneurship internships can be adopted at other institutions.

Background. One of the authors was hired as a faculty member in the Entrepreneurial Studies program at a public university in the Southeast. He accepted the additional duties as Program Coordinator of the Entrepreneurship Intern Program. The Entrepreneurship Internship Program is organized under the university's Entrepreneurial Studies Program, which offers both a major and a minor in entrepreneurship. Approximately eight core entrepreneurship course sections are offered during a typical fall or spring semester, taught by four entrepreneurship faculty members (in addition to others who teach related courses, such as one that teaches advanced business planning and Small Business Management).

The University and Region. The university is a regional university with a student body of approximately 23,000 students. The university has programs of study in Arts, Business Administration, Fine Arts, Music, Science, Nursing, Social Work, and University Studies. The university has a broad array of academic majors and academic minors. In addition, it offers several masters degrees including the Master of Business Administration. Table 1 shows a profile of the university and the region in which it is located.

Internships. Between Spring Semester 2005 and Spring Semester 2007, eighty students were enrolled in student internships. Table 2 summarizes the enrollments by semester in the Entrepreneurship Internship Program. Table 3 provides a profile of a representative selection of internships in which students participated. These internships are not intended to demonstrate the most predominant forms of internships, but rather to let the reader gain an appreciation of the many kinds of businesses to which students may be assigned as well as gain insights from comments submitted by students.

Process Issues and Growth

While the Entrepreneurial Studies Program maintained a Web presence, the Entrepreneurship Intern Program had no such presence, and it was determined that a Web site should be developed. This presence under discussion was not deemed to be just about technology “bells and whistles” (although it was held implicit that the program should look like it belonged in the modern world). It was agreed that in order to leverage public relations and press relations opportunities, a “place” needed to be created such that any interest on the part of constituencies could be appropriately directed. In other words, it would require more than a phone number and sign-up forms to begin creating a public image among entrepreneurial firms and the business community at large.

Although the creation of a dynamic (database driven) site remains as a technology objective of interest, a static site (otherwise known as a “brochure or catalog site”) was developed to serve immediate needs. In the former case, employers could eventually register online and indicate an interest in program participation. Discussions about the possibility of reciprocity were also held, but given a state-owned and operated computer system, this notion was recognized as problematic. In particular, a more sophisticated Web site without the constraints of state ownership would have been geared to feature business community sponsors and program participants. To translate the implications of this line of reasoning into a graphical presentation perspective, the site would be designed to acknowledge supporters and participants by incorporating logos and other art, to be supplied by the sponsors themselves. Unfortunately, this could be interpreted to constitute private advertising on a taxpayer supported system, so questions arose.

It did not seem like a good use of time to wade through the legal and administrative process of answering these questions in light of more immediate goals at hand. While there may be workarounds (or solutions brought to the surface through additional investigation), it was decided at a departmental level to table the idea, for the time being, at least. Thus, the Entrepreneurship Intern Program site was developed based on existing program guidelines and to provide an information resource as rapidly as possible, with other visions for site enhancements and interactivity under consideration for implementation at a later time.

One practical advantage of the static design was that the Program Coordinator (and a co-author of this paper) was able to immediately begin work and implement the creation of the site using personally owned software and existing skills. Database sites typically require the skills of advanced programming specialists. Reliance on external university resources or those of

commercial vendors who may have submitted bids would have in all likelihood, slowed Web site development and deployment time considerably. Hence, the Web site was deployed relatively quickly, during the fall semester of 2004. A departmental level review of the site deemed the work product acceptable for the stated purpose of establishing a “respectable presence.”

Another purpose of the Web site was to service basic needs for information on the part of employers (both those with a possible interest and active participants) as well as students. The site incorporates all necessary forms (see Appendix) and states guidelines for participation. Links for “Student” and “Employer” sections are provided to provide explanations and guidelines to those two separate audiences (this is not to suggest that there are any “secrets”; any site visitor may access either section of the site). Advisors and entrepreneurship faculty are now able to point to the site, which has been proven in practice to satisfy most of the needs that students and employers have for background information, participation guidelines, and administrative forms. Once the Web site presence was created, it became a much easier matter to refer members of the business community and community leaders to the existence of the program. Efforts were made to communicate quite clearly that the university and the business community should work together to create the type of partnership that fostered continued economic growth and prosperity, for the benefit of all concerned.

The local County has a very proactive Chamber of Commerce, which in turn sponsors a strong economic development platform. Chamber and Small Business Development Center Directors, and other business community leaders were contacted directly (e.g., for discussions over lunch and through established Advisory Board meetings), and have been very supportive. On an individual basis, many entrepreneurial businesses are operated by extremely busy founders. Part of the overall strategy has been to acknowledge these day-to-day pressures, but at the same time, to suggest that if the entire community does not “come together” and “stay together” in supporting a progressive entrepreneurial culture, in the long run, everyone will suffer. Part of that culture suggests incubation, mentoring, internships, and active University-business community partnering in additional contexts. Community leaders have wholeheartedly agreed with this perspective, and faculty at the university (i.e., within the Entrepreneurial Studies Program) seem to consider this to be crucial to the success of the Program growth and development efforts. Additional program requirements are shown in Appendix A.

Discussion

Students are strongly encouraged to position themselves within a situation that will likely serve as a stepping stone in their career progression, especially (if it is not obvious) in an entrepreneurial context. Academic assignments include activities that are designed to enhance the experience by emphasizing adequate reflection (Clark, 2003). Journals (Alm, 1996) have been recommended by some scholars and they have proven to be an effective tool within the university’s Entrepreneurship Intern Program as well. Although academic credit is given, many students are eager to apply themselves and gain practical experience through their internship experiences (Tovey, 2001).

Insights Gained

An entrepreneurship internship differs from “garden variety” business and management internships (Lahm, 2006). Most apparent, is the challenge of providing true entrepreneurial insights to students who may have substantially different views and workloads as compared to their chosen entrepreneurial mentors. Another key difference is that the entrepreneurship internship asks, usually of a small, sometimes struggling, but certainly amply challenged business founder, for precious time and resources. Larger, established corporations have formalized routines, HR processes and organizational structures, and do not find it as disconcerting to add one more individual to the staffing mix. Although it is hoped that interns in larger corporate settings are given appropriate challenges, the entrepreneurial internship asserts the need for high level contact with business owners; hence the nature of a regular internship versus an entrepreneurship internship is different relative to the level of commitment required of an organization’s upper management.

Unique Challenges in Securing Entrepreneurship Intern Program Employer Work Sites

In essence, the entrepreneurial business can sometimes view the notion of taking on an intern as a distraction, because it must decide on a role, train, orient, and otherwise accommodate a new individual. The practical implications of this suggest everyday illustrations such as a small business owner having to find space in an already cramped office space, obtain equipment for an intern’s use, and otherwise accommodate someone who had not been in the entrepreneur’s plans. The personal equivalent could be likened to the announcement of an unplanned pregnancy. Further, in the situation advocated by the program, the entrepreneur should agree to provide deep insight into his or her experience, which might include the disclosure of highly sensitive information. Otherwise, the underlying aim of the Entrepreneurship Intern Program—to provide a realistic job preview for a prospective future entrepreneur—is severely diminished. This present line of reasoning may also apply to traditional management internships, as the authors suppose that assigning these interns to top executives (to observe much less participate in everyday activities at that level) is an unlikely pairing in large organizations.

Other concerns are suggested by the pairing of interns with entrepreneurs. It is logical that interns would want to work with firms that are similar, if not exactly, like the type of business that the intern would eventually like to start on his or her own. This means that the entrepreneur may be training an up-and-coming competitor—something that the entrepreneur might be naturally reluctant to do. In a few instances, this dilemma has been solved by negotiating non-compete agreements with time and geographical restrictions. In one instance, the intern was coached to negotiate an agreement that provided for the expansion of the entrepreneur’s business, providing the internship suggested that a longer lasting relationship should ensue afterwards (by adding an additional location to an existing chain of karate studios, which was operated by the intern at the end of his academic training).

The ability to provide such coaching on the part of a given institution’s choice of an entrepreneurship program coordinator-director suggests the necessity of practical business skills (e.g., negotiation, contracts, strategic alliances) as well as academic qualifications. We also suggest that arrangements such as this are a shining example of how entrepreneurship internships may differ from traditional management internships: we expect that those students who are enrolled in the latter would not typically be involved in negotiating agreements of this nature

with large corporations (and probably their HR departments). Interns of this latter type are more likely to be assigned to very specific, preconceived roles with established job descriptions (duties and roles at lower levels within the subject organizations).

The Directory Mentality

We believe—based on direct observation and interviews with students who are contemplating their entrepreneurship internship possibilities—that undergraduate students are representative of typical undergraduate students in terms of their level of preparedness, yet anxiousness about the challenges that they will face in the so-called “real world” (Wilson, 2000, p.17). However, as a whole, students often inquire about the Entrepreneurship Intern Program with the same employment-seeking mentality and approach that students have when they are seeking traditional employment, i.e., they have a “directory mentality,” characterized by (Lahm, 2006) as a mindset which causes students to inquire about a list of employers and positions, expecting that they would be cataloged by the Entrepreneurship Intern Program office (just as they would be in an HR department or an employment firm).

Other scholars have observed that students may not apply the skills that they have learned in areas such as marketing to their own job search (McCorkle, Alexander, Reardon & Kling, 2003). As such, one of the first questions students often ask is “what openings are available?” This of course suggests that these students are ready to be placed in an existing position (where, again, no such position in a small entrepreneurial firm in their industry of interest, with a willing and well suited mentor, et al, exists in the “directory”).

The “Find a Need and Fill it” Mentality

As a whole, students also may have a tendency to procrastinate and are not necessarily as opportunistic as they (or anyone with entrepreneurial aspirations) should be. Without coaching to instruct students to “sell the sizzle” to prospective internship employers, students may simply promote that they are seeking an opportunity (for themselves, which is not a particularly effective promotional appeal) as compared to offering skills and assistance in exchange for gaining entrée to an entrepreneurial business. This coaching, we believe, is vital for arming students with the necessary skills (knowledge and attitude) to identify and secure the best possible internship relative to their own abilities and aspirations.

The development of an ever growing list of prospective placement sites is an objective of the Intern Program Coordinator, and that list has been enlarged over the passing years; nevertheless, students with a “pick an internship from the list mentality” require additional, and sometimes substantial, training (one-on-one and in group formats). If an apparent perfect fit is indicated between a student and a prospective internship employer on “the list” exists, attempts at matchmaking naturally ensue. Otherwise, coaching in prospect research, information interviewing, negotiation, and personal selling techniques is necessitated. It should also be noted that in fielding inquiries that come into the Entrepreneurship Intern Program office from employers, many come in the form of submissions of “position opening announcements” of the traditional (non-entrepreneurial type: field sales assistant, office-administrative, management

trainee, et cetera); the Web site allows for such submissions to be submitted via an online contact form.

Ironically, this training and reorientation of a job (opening) search mentality as compared to one that seeks to understand an entrepreneur's problems and areas of weakness to be addressed, thereby carving out a position—perhaps through a significant project—is deemed to inculcate vital entrepreneurial skills. This is a time consuming process, to teach the alternate mindset of (entrepreneurial) opportunism and networking skills, after (hopefully) guiding the student to find his or her entrepreneurial calling, if one is not apparent in the first place. In short, there are some Entrepreneurship Intern Program applicants who are still not sure what they want to do when they grow up. The positive aspect of the above situation is that by providing guidance, students can engage in the necessary introspective and exploratory processes to determine through research, problem identification, negotiating, et al, where they might “find a need and fill it.” We believe it would be inadequate to characterize this entire process—that of reorienting a mindset—as simply “networking” (to find a “position”!).

In some instances, coaching must start with standard career counselor's questions such as, “do you like working indoors or outdoors?” Students are also taught to engage in information interviews with entrepreneurs and to sell the benefits that they may offer to the entrepreneur (for instance, they could write a business or marketing plan, which as we know, often does not exist). Indeed, the best “door-opener” questions that students should pose are: Do you have a current business plan; a personal selling and marketing plan; a PR plan; a Website; a training and development plan; (and for the rare entrepreneur who has all of these worked out), a contingency and disaster recovery plan? This differs from the approach that they typically would take, announcing all over town that they are “looking for a job (or an internship, as would be the case here).”

Considerations When Designing Program Criteria

Geographic Location. Some of the original documentation and guidelines have required alterations in order to respond to situations that have arisen in the course of administering the Program. As an example, the previously published guidelines dictated that students would complete their internships locally, in a specific county. Generally, it is the case that students will do just that as most who attend are locals. However, in a few instances (early into the period during which the Program Coordinator position was held) students proposed internships that made excellent sense in the context of their entrepreneurial goals, but did not meet the specified geographical criteria. In one particular case, an Asian student was interested in an import/export business, and by leveraging family and personal connections in Singapore, the student had found an outstanding opportunity. Hence, the notion of a geographic restriction was challenged, and subsequent internships have been designed to reflect the possibility that a viable internship might arise anywhere, globally.

Physical Environment. In another instance which challenged existing assumptions and practices, a quadriplegic student was allowed to work across multiple placements, often conducting research and fulfilling obligations via the Internet. One of these assignments allowed him to conduct a feasibility analysis on behalf of a venture capital firm. Another assignment paired the

student with a physics professor who had developed a new type of sensor with possible commercial applications; the professor and university collaborated with the student to develop a business and marketing plan to exploit the intellectual property opportunities associated with the sensor. In both cases, the student's performance was highly praised, and the both internship clients were very satisfied.

Supervision. An occasional (usually mature, non-traditional) student with an already established entrepreneurial business would (logically, we think) inquire about working within his or her own business, as they had already found their own calling. Initially, this appeared to be an intractable problem associated with conflict of interest, in that no student could be allowed to evaluate his or her own performance in a manner that would significantly influence the determination of a final grade (reflecting on one's own performance, on the other hand, is probably a very good idea for professional development in any field of endeavor, and was expected in written assignments that were part of the internship course requirements). Eventually, after considerable angst and thought, workarounds were developed that may be helpful to share here. One such workaround, in an instance where the business model was such that it serviced a client base, involved allowing multiple members of that clientele to serve as the evaluators; the use of multiple raters was deemed appropriate (as compared to typically just one—a single entrepreneur-mentor). In another case, a student had purchased an established business. Part of the buyout arrangement included the retention of the former owner on a consulting basis during a transition period; we concluded that the former owner was as qualified as anyone (in a typical scenario) to provide the evaluative feedback.

Alternative Experiences. In some instances, where no workaround such as discussed above seemed attainable, students were guided to pursue a “view from the other side of the table” approach. A good illustrative example of this would be, for a graphic designer to work on the client-side of the business or for a media concern (e.g., one that ran print advertisements). Other examples might include working with a primary supplier of an existing business, again, to gain insights as to what the view is like from that perspective. At this point, one might suggest that the entrepreneurship internship would not really be the same as working for someone else's entrepreneurial firm. On the other hand, the inherent nature of most entrepreneurship internships, at their best, is such that they can be likened to a simulation, whereas these special cases involved students who were already engaged in running “the real thing.” Thus, the objective became to advance their professional development and the growth of their existing entrepreneurial businesses (and perspectives) from a starting point that was already further along than that of students who were seeking a first-time experience in the entrepreneurial world.

Implications for Research and Practice

Institutions that are considering an entrepreneurially oriented internship program should be encouraged by the range of benefits that they might enjoy, but should also be advised that operating an effective program is a significant undertaking, not to be taken lightly on the part of community leaders, program participants (i.e., employers), or administrators. Small businesses may benefit directly by gaining fresh insights and access to assistance that they would otherwise not be able to afford or would not have considered. Whole communities benefit by creating entrepreneurial cultures, through which personal and small business growth contributes to economic growth and development. Students benefit by gaining hands on experience and

accelerating their personal learning curves whether they find themselves in a traditional employment relationship, or starting a business of their own.

In offering the above, we also feel we should contrast an entrepreneurship internship course, versus a fully implemented Entrepreneurship Intern Program. In the former case, it is typical for qualified faculty members to service a small number of students and employers (whether “in load,” or for additional modest compensation) on an ad hoc basis. In the case of a Program, its attributes include, but are not limited to the following characteristics: it becomes a campus entity unto itself, with a defined market image; it can play an advocacy role in terms of encouraging an entrepreneurial culture community-wide, e.g., formal presentations can be delivered to address members of business, community, civic and professional organizations (or one-on-one, with individual entrepreneurs); the entity can participate in recruitment fairs, and develop formal relationships between community leaders and their organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce executives, et cetera); as an entity, the Program may even have its own Advisory Board. Importantly, all of the above generate the ability to garner PR in association with specific “success stories” (used only with permission of the parties thereto, of course), the Program’s achievements as a whole, or events in which the entity participates or initiates on its own.

Opportunities to engage in organized research efforts are also facilitated by virtue of the probable increased volume of internships through such an entity (with its outreach capability and efforts) as well as the centralization of data collection processes within an office specifically charged with administering such practices. As introduced earlier, leveraging the benefits of such a Program requires a “point person” who will assure that operations are executed and opportunities are realized and become a reality.

Conclusion

Students’ summative reports overwhelmingly suggest satisfaction with their internship experiences through the particular Entrepreneurship Intern Program portrayed herein. Employer evaluations suggest an equally high level of satisfaction with regard to their own experiences with the students. As needs in the business community are in a constant state of flux, it is necessary for the university and similarly involved institutions to adapt. Administered properly, there are numerous opportunities to support a strong business community-university partnership (Neumann, and Banghart, 2001) through an Entrepreneurship Intern Program. However, adequate time and a commitment of resources, planning, administering and reporting must be incorporated into the design of a viable program in order to ensure its growth and development.

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Table 1: Profile of University and Region

Item	Comment	Profile
Region	Southeast United States	Serves large regional area.
City	Small town	The city has a population of 75,000. The city has developed into a retail destination attracting shoppers from a 10-county region. Part of the reason for this phenomenal growth is that it is close to a city with 2 major Interstates as well as a “loop” highway that is designed to become an Interstate in the future.
University	Large Regional State University	Founded in 1911 as a state normal school for teacher education. The university has 23,000 students and offers degrees in Arts, Business Administration, Fine Arts, Music, Science, Nursing, Social Work, and University Studies. The College of Business is accredited by AACSB.
Instructor	New to the university	Terminally degreed at the Ph.D. level, with corporate managerial experience as well as entrepreneurial experience (including the prior ownership of a marketing firm).
Program	Entrepreneurship Intern Program	The faculty member was assigned as the Entrepreneurship Intern Program Coordinator; the course has prerequisites as well as specific requirements for the successful completion of the internship.

Table 2. Summary of Internships between January 2005 and May 2007

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Fall 2004	0	Start-up semester; website designed, promotional efforts and coordination completed.
Spring 2005	9	All ENTR majors
Summer 2005	7	6 ENTR majors
Fall 2005	12	All ENTR majors
Spring 2006	17	All ENTR majors
Summer 2006	8	All ENTR majors
Fall 2006	12	11 ENTR majors
Spring 2007	15	All ENTR majors
Total	80	

Table 3: Examples of entrepreneurship internships in the Entrepreneurship Internship Program; comments are drawn from reflective papers submitted by students.

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Company</i>	<i>Duties</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Martial Arts</i>	Company with three karate school locations.	Responsible for teaching and other aspects of business, servicing 80 students in one location.	“With over 36 years in the business it was not a hard decision to look to...[the owner] as a mentor for my future in the martial arts industry.”
<i>Sports Equipment (Skateboarding Industry)</i>	Single unit retail store.	Customer service and sales, exposure to ordering, inventory control, and suppliers; paying bills, tax forms, finances.	“Working at...[the company] gave me a good idea of [what] running a small retail business would be like.”
<i>Insurance Industry</i>	Local agent for national full-service insurance company.	Studied for banking industry spec. exam (did not pass); assisted with sales prospecting, customer service, some general office duties.	“[The owner] taught me what goes into being an entrepreneur. He majored in Finance and has opened my eyes to what goes into running a business for yourself.”
<i>Recording Industry</i>	Recording studio.	Sound reinforcement and recording of live public performances and studio work.	“From day one I was saturated in it, I learned pre-production, microphone placements...the patch bay, compression, pre-amp stages, player performance techniques from a studio great, mix-down applications, phase cancellation, and mixing effects....This internship experience has solidified even more why I am majoring in entrepreneurship and studying recording on the side.
<i>Fashion Industry</i>	New York headquarters of major clothing designer label.	Runway show productions.	“I really get tickled when I see the show “Project Runway” or the movie “The Devil Wears Prada” because I went through most of what happened on that show and in that movie.

Appendix

Additional Program Requirements

Content for this section is taken from the Entrepreneurship Intern Program Web site.

Internship Objectives

The purpose of the entrepreneurship intern program is to provide student interns with an opportunity to: develop professionally, acquire real-world entrepreneurial experiences, and apply classroom learning to the workplace.

Intern Qualifications

- Entrepreneurship Major
- Senior Standing (80+ semester hours)
- Completion of Required Courses:
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Introduction to Business

Academic Requirements

The student intern agrees to:

- Complete an internship application
- Meet with Internship Coordinator as requested
- Work a minimum of 225 hours for 3 hours of college credit
- Work in a company approved by the Internship Coordinator
- Perform in a professional manner and comply with employing company's regulations and policies
- Maintain employing company's confidentialities
- Ask employer to complete the employer evaluation form provided by the Internship Coordinator
- Submit an Internship Portfolio by designated due date
- Entrepreneur Interview—A typewritten summary of an interview with the employer. Interview questions will be provided by the Internship Coordinator.
- Reflective Paper—A final paper, minimum of two typewritten, double-spaced pages, written as a retrospective of the internship experience.
- Company Literature—Promotional/information brochures, etc. from the employing company.
- Daily Journal—Daily journal entries of internship activities and hours worked. Journal entries should be approximately five to ten sentences and can be used to compose the reflective paper.