

Minority Student Internship Programs

Colonial Penn Center, Oct. 21, 2009, 5-6 p.m.

Introduction by Helen Cheung from Career Services

Natalie Bernal from Sponsors for Educational Opportunity

- Paid summer internships that lead may to full-time offers
- Primarily in NYC but in general northeast
- Many banking internships, philanthropy
- Many Fortune 500 companies offer internships
- Last summer, 14 Penn students participated in program
- Looking for well-rounded students, “philanthropists of the future”
- Open to all majors, 3.0 minimum GPA
- Primarily for juniors, some sophomores, graduating seniors in philanthropy and corporate law

John Saunders from Institute for Responsible Citizenship

- Washington, D.C. and NYC
- High-achieving African-American men
- Government, law, public policy, corporate business, non-profit, medicine, film and the arts, and much more
- Course in constitutional law and meetings with influential leaders
- 16 students per year per location; 32
- Received 340-350 applications – rigorous application
- 40 hrs/week, taking courses at night (in class 6 hrs/week + reading, papers)

Rene Gonzalez from Hispanic Association for Colleges & Universities

- Don't have to be Hispanic to participate in program
- 675 interns placed this year, almost all with government agencies
- 10 week, paid, all majors welcome (particularly business, sci/tech/math)
- Can repeat with the program
- Corporate internship program is much smaller, 24 students last year
- Must have completed freshman year; minimum 3.0 GPA (Deloitte tax/audit internship has 3.3 GPA)
- 70% placed in Washington, D.C.; other 30% in all other states
- Arrangements made for flight to/from D.C. for orientation
- At least \$450-550/week for federal government; corporate internships at least that if not more
- Student Track: 2.5 week annual student development conference this year in Orlando
- Application process is competitive (2250 completed applications, 470 placed last summer)

Joanne Levy from Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics

- SUMR: Summer Undergraduate Minority Research program
- Goals: to get underrepresented minority students interested in going into academia, specifically health services research (apply to graduate programs); bring minorities into this research field for fresh perspectives, improve health outcomes
- Research internship 20 hrs/week with a mentor; could work 40 hrs/week with 2 mentors
- Student may pick researcher to work with
- GRE prep course; attendance academy meeting conference; week-long orientation in health services; weekly luncheon with health services researchers at Penn
- Application online: 1 essay saying why you want to be a part of this program and areas of interest; strong quant grades and aptitude for research, GPA and SAT scores, references (due Feb. 1)
- Former participants of SUMR spoke about their experiences:

Manuel Bramble, junior who did SUMR last year

- Mentor was Dr. Lautenbach
- Took part in research, data collection, saw process; mentor was helpful; wrote a paper
- Intertwined science, epidemiology
- Got to know mentor
- Don't have to be pre-med
- Encourages everyone to apply; students had a lot of fun

Christina Lomax, junior

- 2 mentors: Dr. Holmes (research patient communication in prostate cancer) and Skip Rosoff (health care reform)
- Program shifted her career goals

Senior, Psych major

- Worked with Drs. Gretchen Seuss and Ira Harkavy
- Learned a lot about conducting research, helped her build on her interests
- Applying to grad school now

Student who did SUMR 2 summers ago

- You can go in from any angle in health (policy, econ, anthropology)
- 2 mentors: cost-effectiveness analysis and epidemiological research in Mexican women immigrants
- Met some really great people

Senior who did SUMR 2 summers ago

- Learning research skills can take you anywhere you want to go
- Build relationship with professor (still working with him)
- Having research skills and being able to think critically is applicable to any career field

Victoria who did SUMR 3 summers ago

- Now a first year Ph.D student in health care management
- Worked for a year at Mathematica policy research after graduation and before graduate school

- SUMR gave her head start in the Mathematica job
- She learned more than you would in classroom setting
- Summer helped make sense of what a life in academia would be like

Kelli Cottom from INROADS

- International non-profit focusing on paid summer internships for diverse students interested in accounting, marketing, finance, engineering, IT, and some applied sciences, depending on geography and sponsors
- Looking for high-achieving student leaders
- 23,000 INROADS alumni
- Equip students with tools they need (coupled with Penn education) to be successful in business
- Eligibility: multi-summer internship, multiple rotations (within same organization or with different ones)
- Fortune 500 companies, full-time, 40 hrs/week, 12 weeks
- Rigorous process: online application, interview, training as part of candidate selection process and as intern (geared toward professional development, depending corporate environment)
- Once you return to school, must keep up with INROADS representative to keep up-to-date on academics (for future matching)
- Address listed on application is where app will be sent (regional office)
- Over 400 sponsor companies who participate

Helen from CS: What makes an application successful, and what is the single biggest no-no you've seen?

- **HACU:** Biggest obstacle is commonly the essay. Take care that it's well-written, and spell-check! Convey serious interest. Prepare for the phone interview and face-to-face interview – take the time to do mock interviews. Play up your previous working experience on your resume, especially if you have experience in the sector you'd like to be placed in. Answer all questions in application!
- **Helen:** Career Services provides help with all those application materials, including mock interviews.
- **IRC:** Emphasize relevant experience on your resumes. Instead of just listing clubs and activities, explain why they're relevant to what you're applying for. How are you engaged in the work that you want to go into? Writing samples should be read by at least 2 other people. Essays should be interesting! 3.2226 doesn't equal 3.3, so be honest with listing GPA (if it asks for cumulative, don't list semester).
- **SUMR:** Your goals should mesh with the goals of the program.
- **SEO:** Build a bridge between what you're looking for and what you've done. Be genuine, honest, and transparent. Apply to where you honestly think your career

track will be, not necessarily where you think is easiest to be placed. Take the interview seriously. Do your homework (Who runs the organization? What's the story behind it? How do you fit in?). Know the fundamentals of that industry.

- **INROADS:** The application starts with your first correspondence. Be very aware of your grammar and business writing skills, even in emails. Don't be too comfortable and too familiar – always carry level of professionalism through written correspondence and phone. Watch your tone. Even if you don't get the opportunity to meet with someone face-to-face, don't discount phone interview. Articulate what it is that you want and what you have to offer. Be genuine. We can see through if you're just saying what you think we want to hear.
- **HACU:** Also, when you're using an email address, realize what message you're sending out via your email address. SloppyJOE@yahoo is not appropriate. Use your name. If you have multiple email addresses, don't forget to check them all! Return ALL phone calls and emails.

Student question for SEO: When is it appropriate to express interest in philanthropy as well as corporate opportunities?

- **SEO:** If there's a good opportunity to mention it during interview, speak up. We'll see it especially if it's listed on resume. But you don't necessarily have to jam everything into an interview. Make sure everything you want to mention is there somewhere in your application, even if you don't speak about it.

Student question for HACU: Once students get into the program, how do you get matched up?

- **HACU:** Next step is school enrollment certification. Then (assuming you've met requirements) D.C. staff reviews application online and match you up with those agencies you're eligible for. We'll send your application over the agency liaison, who has access to our system; they'll go in and see which students have been matched up to their positions. At that point, it's up to the agencies to review the student applications that have been tagged for them. If they like what they see, they'll contact the HACU D.C. office and make an offer. You'll have 24-72 hours to respond. Then, there'll be some more documents to fill out; and finding housing.
Federal agencies: process from December to May
Corporate side: much faster process, some offers made as early as January
The earlier you get your application in, the sooner we can match you.

Student question for HACU: Should students indicate in their application where they necessarily want to work?

- **HACU:** Don't say you only want to work for federal agency X. It reduces your opportunities. You can always turn an offer down later on. Don't narrow it down initially. Maintain flexibility.

For SEO: Can an additional essay ever be looked down on if you want to express your really strong interest?

- **SEO:** The additional essay is for special circumstances, to fill gap in the application. Don't fill it out if it doesn't explain a special circumstance (e.g. if you're sick for a long time, your house burns down, you take on too much) Everyone has a weakness somewhere, but be ready to talk about it – don't make excuses, and explain what you learned. The interview is where you're supposed to shine and show your enthusiasm.

For INROADS: If you apply to INROADS, can you also apply to companies outside of the program?

- **INROADS:** Depends on your geography and the regional office in charge of your application. You're matched up with 1 to 3 companies. The sponsors are paying \$4000/summer for the intern – they ultimately want you to be someone who can matriculate full-time. You should apply to INROADS and apply to other internships, but if you get the INROADS internship with company X, then you're considered an INROADS intern, so you have to meet INROADS standards.

Thank you!