Creating Your Own Internship

Looking for an internship to fit your needs? Consider creating your own internship opportunity! As with many good jobs, internships are not always advertised. Taking the initiative to contact the people or the organization with whom you would like to work may produce a rewarding experience for both you and your internship site!

1. Review your Resume
   - Be sure your resume reflects the skills, experience and academics necessary for the field in which you’re interested in building an internship.
   - Visit the Experience and Professional Development Office (XPD) to have your resume critiqued and refined to highlight how you’re qualified for that experience:
     - CSB Center – Academic Service Building (320)-363-5707
     - SJU Center – Mary Hall #10 (320)-363-3236

2. Research Specific Companies or Organizations
   - Research possible internships that may not appear on E-Link or other databases.
   - Search CANE Files to identify companies and alums that work in that industry.
   - Search for companies or organizations that might meet your needs and interests. Sometimes a simple Google search, based on your geographic location of choice, can be a helpful starting point.

3. Identify a Key Contact
   - Determine the head of the department of the company or organization with which you’re interested in creating an internship.
   - Find relevant names, or the company recruiter, through the organization’s website, networking contacts (LinkedIn, friends, family or CSB/SJU alumni), or by calling the organization for the name and title of the individual who works within a particular area or specialty.

4. Contact Key People
   - Consider contacting the person identified in the step above either via email or phone call. A sample email template can be found on page two.
   - Be sure to define:
     - What type of experience you’re pursuing (e.g. “a summer position in which I can use my strong writing skills).
     - Your area of interest/expertise (my keen interest in environmental issues)
o What you will bring to the experience (a willingness to work hard, an eagerness to learn and contribute)
o Focus on creating a mutually beneficial framework so the company and you both benefit.

- **Two important pieces of advice as you are making contact:**
  1. **Do not say,** “Do you have any internships available?” If they have not used students in this way before, their answer will probably be “no.” Describe your desire to work for the company in terms of a summer (or term or semester) “work experience” to learn more about the field.
  2. Ask if there are any projects they need done which you could complete for them while gaining experience in the field. Share information about background and skills you have that might be of interest to them.

5. **Start Early!**
   - Take advantage of the semester breaks to contact potential internship sites. You need time to get your resume to the appropriate person(s). Do your company research in the XPD Office before you leave campus and ask staff for help in building alumni networking contacts.
   - Creating an internship takes time. Be sure to allow enough time for the process to be successful.

**Sample Contact: Email Template**

Dear **(Key Contact),**

I recently met with the CSB/SJU Experience and Professional Development Office and staff members there encouraged me to reach out about the possibility of a spring semester internship. *(Fill in blank here based on how you became interested in the organization or company).* In reviewing your website and the exciting work you do, I see my skills as a *(list relevant profession e.g. student or past intern)* bringing benefit to your mission by *(fill in the blank here based on research from the website about projects the company is working on that you’re interested in being a part of)*. I’m looking for an internship *(how many hours, duration/length seeking)*.

I’ve attached my resume here for your review. I’d greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss ways that we could meld my skills *(list your skills briefly here)*, into an internship that could benefit your work. I look forward to hearing from you about how best to develop this experience, either over email, phone or in-person, at your earliest convenience.

Best,

John Smith
320-363-5300

**Questions about next steps or how to approach internship sites? Contact:**

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