

## **Key Take-Home Messages from 4/7/22 Symposium on Unpaid Internships**

### **Introductory remarks**

Matthew Hora, UW-Madison/CCWT

- Work-based and work-integrated learning is justifiably a huge focus in HE, but the vast #s of students who don't pursue internships at all - and especially the presence of unpaid positions that are inaccessible for many of them - is a major problem
- From my perspective as a researcher of WBL, WIL and institutional reform, the goal isn't to ban unpaid internships outright but instead to find solutions NOW to ensure that all college students have funded internship experiences
- That such solutions will need to involve creative and diverse types of cross-sectoral partnerships among HE professionals and faculty, employers and the business community, philanthropy, and policymakers so that systemic and sustainable mechanisms are put in place

### **Panel #1: Research on unpaid internships**

Josh Kahn, NACE

- Non-profits & State/Local Gov't need help funding unpaid internships.
- Members of historically marginalized groups are under-represented in internship participation, particularly paid internships.
- Although more privileged students can more easily afford to take unpaid internships, they are not the only ones taking them.

James Jones, Rutgers University-Newark

- Congressional internships matter. These work opportunities are an expression of democratic citizenship that support the day-to-day operations of the federal legislature, train and socialize political novices to lawmaking, and provide a pipeline to paid employment and elective office
- White students are overrepresented in paid congressional internship positions. In addition, Black and Latino students are underrepresented in these same paid positions.
- Congress is a non-transparent employer, which makes it difficult to hold lawmakers accountable for not employing a diverse workforce.

Nidia Bañuelos, UW-Madison/CCWT

- In addition to using their social networks, students are adept at combining various assets they possess from their families, cultures, communities of origin, and personal experiences - often described as their Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). Internships are spaces for students to use and grow their CCW. However, educators and employers need tools for recognizing and measuring CCW to best support students in this endeavor.
- Students discuss career values and work prospects (including internships) with family - even if their family members do not have experience working in their field of interest. Indeed, the qualitative findings from our research show that family members sometimes connect students to informal job shadowing or "internship-like" experiences through personal connections.

Hongwei Yu, NSCI/CCWT/UW-Madison

- Internship is critical student learning and professional success. Yet internship participation is not prevalent. Students encountered significant barriers to internship participation.
- Unpaid internships exacerbates issues related to internship access and equality.
- Systematic efforts from faculty, student affairs professionals, and employers should be made to improve student experiential learning and promote student professional success at institutions of higher education and beyond.

### **Panel #2: Funding unpaid internships**

Annie Weinschenk (Assistant Director, University of Maryland Baltimore County) on the [Maryland Technology Internship Program](#))

- Work closely with campus partners who advocate for resources and funding at the state level. If there is a government affairs office on campus consider pitching them an idea for an internship pipeline that can be funded through the state.
- Providing all constituents (other campuses, colleges and departments on your campuses, tech councils or department of commerce and other important stakeholders) with outcomes that tell a great story about your program and the impacts it has on workforce development across your state.

Jessica Klyn de Novelo, Associate Dean, Career Development and Civic Engagement, [Central College](#)

- Participation in the [Federal Work Study Experiment](#) has provided both opportunities for creativity as well as extra funds to support students engaging in both non-profit as well as private organizations. One unique area of expansion has been with small businesses and start-ups to create new, paid internships. If you have capacity to more fully partner with your campus financial aid, there are MANY opportunities to leverage FWS funds.
- If you're not already partnering with community-based learning/service-learning offices, and [Campus Compact](#) you should be. There are opportunities, particularly with part-time AmeriCorps programs that can support students who tend to do unpaid internships at nonprofits engage in career related activities while earning an education award and sometimes a living stipend.

### **Panel #3: Campus-based strategies**

Lana Farley, University of Baltimore (JLD Program)

- JLD program is a win-win for students and employers. Students can gain hands-on experience, build their resume, engage their community, and make money. Employers can move their mission forward with increased human resources, develop a potential talent pipeline, and keep their costs low.
- If you work with student employment, there is an organization called NSEA (National Student Employment Association) and they provide training on JLD at a fairly low cost.

Emily Pettinato, The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce Small Business Internship Fund

- The Chamber's Small Business Internship Fund reimburses member businesses half of what they paid to host an intern. This helps the small business be able to host an intern and develop a talent pipeline for students.

- It is important to ensure that students are aware of the opportunities at area businesses and prepare them to be career ready.

Kathleen Rause, University of Wisconsin-Madison, [SuccessWorks](#)

- [SuccessWorks Internship Fund](#) is available to assist students with the expenses of unpaid or underpaid internships, with the goal of increasing access to internships for students of all financial backgrounds.
- [Community Impact Internships](#) give students the opportunity to apply for paid internships with local nonprofits and small businesses. This program also allows organizations the chance to host an intern, even if they do not have a budget for intern salaries.
- Both of these programs are donor and/or grant-funded.

Dwayne Peterson, New College of Florida, [Community-Driven Internship Program](#)

- The number of internships is a predictor of early career outcomes for liberal arts undergraduates.
- Aligning college/university resources with local community workforce needs can be challenging and universities often do not consider community needs when designing internship experiences and programs. Community partners also rarely have an opportunity to shape student learning (and job training) in a way that meets their current and future workforce needs.
- A community-driven model invites employers and community organizations from industries that align with your campus strengths and student interests to submit internship projects and funds the projects to include intern salaries and administrative costs. This works particularly well with industries with crowded early career/entry-level labor markets, increasing access to opportunity (e.g., arts, nonprofits, behavioral health, laboratory research, journalism/communications, public health, education, humanities-related work).

### **Breakout Session: More ideas on fundraising and campus-based strategies**

Patrick Green, Loyola University Chicago, Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, & Scholarship

- Funding opportunities to support students with unpaid internships exist by partnering with campus entities, including Office of Financial Aid, Career Center, Student Employment/Federal Work Study program, Advancement/Development, Community Service/Service-Learning/Community Engagement office, etc.
- Many institutions of higher education have developed innovative and creative programs to support students – this is an exercise in imagination to support student learning

Ben Trager, UW-Milwaukee Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership, & Research

- Leverage existing models of internship programs to incorporate campus resources. Campus support in development of internship positions and recruiting adds value for employer partners, which may increase their commitment to financially supporting interns and the program.
- Centering the partnership and borrowing orientations from service-learning and community engagement supports development of co-educator status, facilitates communication and resource sharing, and supports reciprocity and mutual benefit

Megan Hollis, Virginia Commonwealth University

- Creating and/or embracing a culture of career support on your campus is essential. Our program has been successful because there was campus-wide support starting in the ideation phase.
- Do your research and share what you learned. So many institutions across the country were willing to sit and talk with my team and me. Those conversations absolutely informed the development and direction of our program.

Sarah Rosenthal, New York University Wasserman Center for Career Development

- Start by looking at successful existing programs and find ways to adapt them to the needs of new programs as it relates to updating the mission, stakeholder expectations, university priorities, etc.
- Extensive marketing across campus will not only draw more student interest but will enable other opportunities for growth such as attracting the attention of potential donors or partners.

Andrew Miller, Loyola University Chicago Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, & Scholarship

- Make sure administrators across the University know about the need for internship funding—stay front of mind for when opportunities arise.
- Utilize various constituencies to increase your message. One of our scholarship programs only exists because students and our student government demanded it to address equity concerns for students.