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In Their Shoes

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In Their Shoes

Student Interns Laugh and Learn with Those Who Know What it Means to be a Titan

Utilize your alumni network. Obtain an internship in your chosen field. Most Illinois Wesleyan University students hear this advice, but only the most motivated students combine these two suggestions and take the initiative to pursue meaningful connections with alumni.

This semester, 141 students report working at internships, including a growing number of students interning under the supervision of alumni.

“While any internship with a great supervisor is a wonderful opportunity, the chance to work closely with an IWU alum is extra special,” said Laurie Diekhoff, internship coordinator and assistant director of the Hart Career Center. “Our alumni enjoy giving back to the university, so they often go out of their way to mentor an intern and help the student make connections with other alumni or colleagues.”

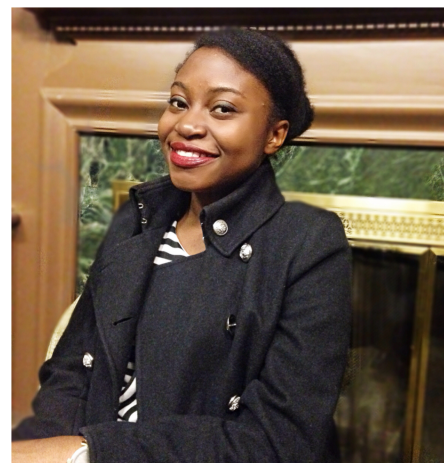
For both students and alumni, these internships have proven to be invaluable experiences.

From Practice Interview to Real Internship

Business administration major Moyo Ajayi '17 is interning at Martin One Source, where she works under the supervision of company president Dave Moravec '84. Located in Champaign, Ill., Martin One Source is a printing resource and procurement partner for its clients.

“I have been, for quite some time, on campus, helping with student interviews at the Hart Career Center,” said Moravec, who has served as president of the company since January 2014. “Moyo was one of the interview candidates that I had during the mock interviews.”

Impressed by Ajayi’s experience with social media and her outgoing nature, Moravec hired Ajayi as an intern. “He saw that I had interned with a corporate communications firm over the summer, so he told me that they had an opening for the position of social media coordinator at his company,” Ajayi said.



Moyo Ajayi '17



Dave Moravec '84

An international student from Nigeria, Ajayi has worked remotely for Martin One Source from her room at Pfeiffer Hall since October 2014. “My job is to develop and maintain the company's social media presence,” Ajayi said. “So far, I have set up the company's LinkedIn page and I currently manage their Facebook page, too.”

Moravec said Ajayi often directs him as to what content she needs. “As the president of a company, I like the fact that she’s motivated enough and forthright enough to say, ‘this is what I need from you,’ rather than taking a more laid-back approach and having a deadline pass and not met,” he said.

According to Ajayi, her internship has helped her develop the ability to work independently, and working for an IWU alum has proved to be a valuable experience.

“He is very helpful and committed to my growth career-wise. Also, since he went to school here, he understands what it means to be a student in IWU,” she said.

***Arbeitskollegen und Deutsch Liebhaber* (Work Colleagues and German-language aficionados)**

As a German minor, Cameron Leberecht '16 (Elgin, Ill.) had already met BethAnne Dorn '10 at a German student-alumni dinner. When Professor of German Sonja Fritzsche mentioned an internship opportunity at Dorn's company, Leberecht considered applying to be "a no-brainer."

An international business and history double major, Leberecht '16 is working as search engine optimization (SEO) intern at Mavidea Technology Group. Dorn, who double majored in German and English at Illinois Wesleyan, has worked as a SEO specialist at Mavidea for three years.



Cameron Leberecht '16

Leberecht's work is focused on SEO and content creation. "I'm paired with a local Mavidea client, and it's my job to create written content to improve their website, improve their search engine rankings and increase their web visibility," he said. He has been working almost exclusively with internrocket.com, a local startup that uses a mix of micro-projects and internships to match people with potential jobs.

According to Leberecht, working for an IWU alum is "a phenomenal networking advantage, as each IWU alum has been exactly where we were before."

"[BethAnne] is really understanding and flexible when it comes to scheduling, as she knows what the expectations are like here," Leberecht said. "We also have a series of professors and classes in common, so we're never short on things to talk about."



BethAnne Dorn '10

Shared Stories, Advantageous Advice

A sociology major from Danville, Ill., Emma Peck '15 works as a volunteer services intern at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center. "I recruit volunteers from within the community to help with projects, events, and to volunteer," Peck said. "[I also] conduct orientation and training for new volunteers, and plan, organize, and carry out the Volunteer Appreciate Event."

Peck is working for Sue Seibring '82, Manager of Volunteer Services at Advocate BroMenn.

"As I walked into Sue's office for the first time, I immediately noticed her Illinois Wesleyan diploma," Peck said. "It is amazing to see how proud she is of her alma mater. I have really enjoyed the doors Illinois Wesleyan University has opened for me."

Seibring said she hires IWU students as interns because their liberal arts education provides great help and out-of-the-box thinking. "The students are high achievers, driven, intelligent, and dependable," she said.



Sue Seibring '82 and Emma Peck '15

According to Peck, her internship has not only helped her understand and experience the dynamics of a nonprofit organization, but has also allowed her to work with a diverse group of individuals. "I have gained a multitude of experiences and knowledge that will be extremely useful for my future in an MBA program and career," Peck said.

And working alongside an IWU alumna has proved to be instrumental for Peck. “Sue and I have been able to bond over common experiences and laugh at shared stories. She has been able to share great advice because she has been in my shoes,” Peck said. “Our connection has been strong and I hope to remain in contact with her because she is a great role model.”

Alumni Commitment To Fellow Titans

As for the alumni, hiring IWU students as interns produces considerable benefits.

“I’ve always said that Illinois Wesleyan students have learned how to learn,” said Moravec. “Once you get into a work environment, you’re going to learn what that company needs in whatever aspect it is that you’re hired for.”

In a previous job, Moravec hired multiple IWU students as interns, and even extended job opportunities to some students post-graduation. “The quality that Illinois Wesleyan students have is such a high level of performance, that I’ve just always been impressed by the caliber of students,” Moravec said. “The added bonus is the personality of the individual.”

In addition, the opportunity to mentor current students is a valuable takeaway for alumni.

“When students begin looking for jobs, prospective employers want to know about the student’s ‘job experience.’ I am thrilled to potentially help a future alum launch their first job, not only with the experience learned, but also by supplying a job reference,” Seibring added. “Helping future Titan alumni should be a goal for all of us!”

By Tia Patsavas '16