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Koka's Experience a Perfect Example of What Internships Should Be

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— A good internship experience should give a college student the opportunity to apply his or her classroom knowledge in a work setting, help the student establish professional contacts and gain confidence, and explore career possibilities.

Beatrice Koka's experience at COUNTRY Financial has been the perfect example of a great internship.

Koka '16 (Aurora, Ill.) is a Diversity and Inclusion intern at COUNTRY. Her primary responsibility has been to coordinate the "Learning and Leading" program at COUNTRY for 21 local high school students. In this paid position, she developed a mentorship program for the students, organized job shadow events, arranged transportation, and conducted professional development workshops.



Beatrice Koka '16 (right) coordinated a program for high school students as a COUNTRY Financial intern.

Even though she was excited and eager to learn, it was not an experience that came easily at first. "I went into this internship feeling a bit overwhelmed and uncertain about my capability to organize an internship program," said Koka, a psychology major. "Over time, I gained confidence in my organizational skills. I saw my internship as an opportunity to grow professionally, and I was able to inspire others to do that, too."



Beatrice Koka '16

Koka said the internship also helped her discover a new career path. "I hope to go into human resource management, and this internship has given me the chance to not only learn more about it, but also receive direct guidance and support from amazing COUNTRY employees working in the field," she said.

She found the internship by meeting representatives from COUNTRY Financial through the **Hart Career Center's** annual Internship Fair, which is scheduled for Sept. 28. Koka interviewed for the internship through the Career Center's on-campus recruitment program, which allows employers to

conduct screening interviews on campus.

"Beatrice's experience provides a shining example of a high-impact internship that can play a transformative role in helping a student develop future career plans," said Laurie Diekhoff, associate director for career engagement. "We appreciate the efforts of employers like COUNTRY, who offer paid professional internship positions for students that not only provide opportunities to learn and grow, but also give students a chance to make significant contributions to their organizations."