

GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A REQUIRED BUSINESS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (BIP)

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ABSTRACT

Internships are becoming increasingly important for business education. Over 90% of business schools offer the option of internship, but only a few require it. In light of well-documented benefits of internships for students, business schools and employers, it is appropriate to develop required business internship programs (BIP). Needle needs to be moved for implementing required BIP across all business schools. A required BIP benefits all students and not just those who choose to take advantage of the option. This paper provides a road map for designing and implementing such a program drawing on extensive literature and the author's own experiences at the College of Business and Economics of a small, private university in the Midwest. This paper is designed to move the needle for implementing required BIPs.

GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A REQUIRED BUSINESS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (BIP)

Business internships, in their various forms, offer benefits to business students, employers and business schools (Cook, Parker, & Pettijohn, 2004; Gault, Redington, & Schlager, 2000; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Swanson & Tomkovick, 2011; Weible, 2009). It is not surprising that over 90% of all colleges offer internships or discipline-related work experience for credit (Devine, Linurd, Miller & Wilson, 2007; Knouse & Fontenot; Wieble, 2009). In the Updyke and Sanders' 2005 survey of 133 AACSB accredited business schools, approximately 86% (114 schools) offered students opportunity to earn credit for discipline-specific work experience (internship/co-op/practical experience), but only 12 schools (9%) required it for all their majors. Interestingly, in the Alpert, Heaney, and Kuhn (2009) survey academics disagreed that internship should be required. They attribute the views to the perception of change and logistical costs involved in implementing a required program. According to Divine et al. (2007), there are multiple difficult challenges to implementing and administering required internship programs. In addition to the challenges, very limited information is available on existing programs from whom to learn and after which to model a new program. Butler University and the Craig School of Business (CSB) of California State University, Fresno (CSUF) are among select schools which require internships for which some information in academic journals is available. There are other articles that offer various models that can be used on specific aspects (e.g., administrative structure etc.). No comprehensive step-by-step guide, however, is available that integrates theoretical discussion with practical decision making. The purpose of this paper is to identify the key decision points, possible alternatives and the decisions that our university rendered and their rationale. The goal is to provide a resource and offer encouragement to other schools that would like to either implement or make a transition from optional internships to required internships for business students.

Benefits of internships from all key stakeholders perspectives are well chronicled elsewhere (Cook et al., 2004; Gault et al., 2000; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Swanson & Tomkovick, 2011). Noteworthy highlights that underscore the need for having required BIP for all majors include results such as noted by Gault et al. (2000) in their study of business school alumni employed with 1 to 5 years of work experience. In a well-controlled comparison of the groups with or without internship experience, interns were found to have obtained their first jobs quicker with more than 9% higher entry-level compensation. The salary gap between the two groups increased to almost 17% in about 5 years post-graduation as interns noted quicker promotions and better year-end bonuses. Such extrinsic rewards of internships can be attributed to better career preparation skills such as computer applications, creative thinking, job interviewing, job networking and relationship building reported by the interns. The positive effects of internship participation persist over the entire four-year period studied. GPA, major, gender and other demographic variables did not produce significant results. Also, the intern group reported higher overall job satisfaction. Taylor (1988), in a relatively rigorous quasi-experimental design, also found such results previously. She found that interns relative to non-interns were viewed better qualified by recruiters, more likely to be hired, were offered higher salaries, expressed greater satisfaction with extrinsic rewards, and had better vocational sense of self. In addition, some studies such as Clark (2003) have noted better classroom performance of students upon return from their internship experience. It is argued that through internships students learn to connect theory with practice and hence become more engaged in the classroom and better students. Educational benefits might accrue even when no formal assignments linking theory with practice are required and career crystallization can even result from unsuccessful internships from the student perspective (Templeton, Updyke & Bennett, 2012). Understandably, student participation in internships is increasing (Gault et al., 2000) and has been reported as high as 80% (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2001). Non-interns seem to be aware of the missed opportunity and favor making internships a requirement more strongly than students with internship experience. In the Moghaddam (2011) survey of Craig School of Business students, non-interns actually more strongly believed than the cohort group with experience that internships are an effective means for better business education and career preparation. The benefits of internships seem so convincing that Cook et al. (2004) concluded that internships should be required to graduate well-rounded individuals. They are not alone in reaching this conclusion. Weible (2009) notes that internships are underappreciated for the role they play in business schools because such a small percentage require them. Knouse, Tanner, and Harris (1999) find it disturbing

that internships are not a standard part of the college experience of all business students. Their concern is justified in light of the fact that generally speaking, 20% of educational institutions were reported to require internships for graduation, while less than 4% of business schools did so for all their majors (Templeton et al., 2012). The availability of opportunity may be sufficient for select students to benefit but Young, Wright and Stein (2006) note that a well-structured required program is the stimulus needed by most business students to achieve professional maturity at a relatively young age.

DESIGNING A REQUIRED BUSINESS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (BIP)

The benefits of internships might be unquestionable, but the concerns about designing an effective program are real. If a program is not well designed or implemented, it can detract a student from academic pursuits, diminish a school’s self and public image, and waste scarce resources (Gault et al., 2000). A resource guide such as this paper could assist in minimizing such pitfalls. The process of implementing a required BIP either from ground zero or transitioning from an elective program is presented as a series of seven decision points.

Decision Point 1: Is a required BIP a good fit for your school?

Divine et al. (2007) offer an excellent framework for assessing the fit of a school for required internships. Their framework is offered for marketing departments, but it will inform decision making at the school/college/program level just as well. Table 1 shows the framework’s key criteria, its components, and how the criteria fit in the case of our COBE.

**TABLE 1
GOODNESS OF FIT**

Criteria (Divine, et. al – 2007)	Fit for COBE
<i>Mission & Core Values:</i> Better fit for schools with teaching orientation, undergraduate focus and high priority for establishing industry contacts.	Better fit because of COBE’s core values of competency-based, student-centered, experiential learning are in line with the expectations of potential employers; and teaching orientation in both undergraduate and MBA.
<i>National Prestige:</i> Better fit for schools with regional reach and not highly ranked or with very high prestige element.	Better fit because COBE is ACBSP accredited, attracts majority of its students and employers from sixty-mile radius, and is not nationally ranked.
<i>Student Demographics:</i> Better fit for schools with larger population of traditional students and small percentage of non-traditional and international students.	Better fit because 80% students are traditional and only 10% are non-traditional and 10% international.
<i>Resources:</i> Better fit for schools with strong budget.	Worse fit because of lack of support for travel and generally weak budget situation.
<i>Purpose of Program:</i> Better fit for school wishing to be benefit all students rather than showcase best and the brightest.	Better fit because COBE’s mission aims to provide competencies prized by employers to all its students.
<i>Existing Internship Director:</i> Better fit if expansion with an existing seasoned director rather than change in personnel.	Better fit because the person was willing to continue in the expanded role.

At the Craig School of Business (CSB) at California State University, Fresno (SSUF), the internship requirement was adopted as a major component of its mission as part of its strategy to become nationally recognized as an applied school of business (Moghaddam, 2011). As noted in the table, a required program was not a perfect fit for our COBE, but fit well into the majority of the Goodness of Fit criteria.

Decision Point 2: How to gain the support of key constituencies?

As per Narayanam, Olk and Fukami (2010), internships comprise three sets of actors – the school, employers and students. For-credit internships require coordination between these set of actors and the importance of collaboration is magnified when the BIP is required (Clark, 2003). As per Narayanam et al. (2010) model, preparedness of employers, students and school is a critical antecedent for an effective BIP. Lorenzo-Aiss and Mathisen (1996) emphasize the importance of interest and desire of these three constituents for success of a program. Despite the acknowledgements of the criticality of respective constituent roles, information on how to gain their support for internships is difficult to find.

A Business Advisory Council (BAC) is one vehicle many business schools use to connect with key business leaders. While no articles in the internship literature explore the role of a BAC, it was their push that had our COBE start its journey toward a required BIP. A resolution by its BAC in favor of the program along with its pledge of support for creating opportunities caused action in the college. As an Interim Dean at the time, when I presented the BAC resolution to the college faculty, there were serious concerns. These concerns ranged from placing ill-prepared students in the work place and risking academic reputation, not having enough opportunities for all students, adding cost to student education, and maintaining the academic quality of internships. Updye from Butler University also mentions such anxiety among faculty of other schools on the thought of required internships. Most schools would need to answer these legitimate faculty questions, though schools with high national rankings, located in areas with abundance of employers and no concern with enrollment or student employability may not face such anxiety or have the need to address such issues ((Divine et al., 2007). In our debate, many of the issues were addressed through creativity. Faculty support of the BIP required creation of a zero-credit hour option called “work experience.” Creation of a zero credit hour course, in addition to the regular internship course, addressed several of the issues such as no additional cost or time. Internship requirements screen out students with low GPAs steering these students into the zero credit option that eased concerns about academic quality.

In 1986, Hite and Bellizzi noted that students perceived internships to be a better supplement to classes than cases or guest speakers and they expected internships to lead to job offers. Elyer (1993) noted that students generally claim to have learned more in the field than the classroom though they generally do not show an increase in factual knowledge. A Follow-up article exploring student perspectives on business internships (Cannon & Arnold, 1998), suggests that students do not see internships as an extension of their academic classes. Student expectations for writing papers, doing outside readings, and being tested on learning outcomes have been weakening over the years. Students also expect flexibility and academic credit (Cannon & Arnold, 1998). Cannon’s observations are confirmed by Cook et al. (2004). Rothman (2007) also found students to view internships not as an extension of the classroom but as a separate element of their preparation. In light of such evidence, it would be logical to design internship requirements and assessment with the student perspective in mind. Clark (2003) at the University of Idaho uses a blend of practical and reflective assignments to balance the academic and applied aspects of the internships. Their business school offers flexibility by allowing students a choice. Their students are given one credit hour for each academic assignment, which they can choose from a menu of assignments ranging from work product to internship and coursework connections. Butler University (Templeton et al., 2012) also uses a blend ranging from a career goals paper to written reflections and portfolio. Our COBE uses a portfolio that incorporates documentation of projects completed and reflection on their connection to the student’s internship outcomes.

Decision Point 3: What management model to use for the BIP?

Lorenzo-Aiss and Mathisen (1996) offer four alternate models: Faculty Model, Faculty Administrative Model, College of Business Model, and Administrative Model (university level). These models require varying levels of commitment from college faculty, administration, students and employers. A close view of these models suggests that there are basically three models: faculty, administrative and a combination of the two. The administrative model can be at the school level or the university level. The authors discuss these models in the context of a single department – marketing, but the extension of the models to the college level is logical. The faculty model requires the highest level of faculty commitment and provides the highest amount of academic control. Student interests and responsibilities drive the process. Students select their own employers with or without the assistance of resources available on campus through career services, student organizations and faculty. Under the guidance of the internship faculty advisor, students determine their learning outcomes, establish requirements for performance assessment and register for internship course by completing the required paperwork. A faculty member works closely with the employers in all phases of the process. The faculty enforce the student eligibility criteria. In the administrative models, administration becomes the record keeper, enforcer and relationship builder with employers and students, but faculty maintain the academic aspects of the course such as design and assessment of academic assignments. The combination model is the mix of the two. The authors do not provide a comparative analysis of the models and they do not discuss the criteria for their fit for a college. Intuitively, the size of the schools and available resources will play a role in the selection of the model. Butler University uses the College of Business Model. The University of Idaho’s College of Business and Economics seems to use the Faculty Model (Clark, 2003). Our COBE uses the combination model where as a faculty member, half of my position is committed to administering the BIP program. While I am solely responsible for the academic components, close relationship with the University’s Career Services ensures necessary resources for the business students. Knouse et al. (1999) advocate the appointment of Internship Director for the college arguing that career services are typically overwhelmed and college needs a champion and a clearinghouse.

Decision 4: What should be the goal(s) of the BIP?

Alpert et al. (2009) consider goals of an internship program to be one of three fundamental kinds. Different perspectives and interests of the three key stakeholders can make it challenging to define mutually agreeable goals to serve all three stakeholders. Academics tend to focus on the educational value of the experience, students focus on gaining practical experience to complement their classroom learning to improve their employability, and employers are often focused on being able to hire the best. Differences in the perspectives are noted by Hall, Stiles, Kuzma, & Elliott (1995), as well as Alpert, et al. (2009). Fortunately, Alpert’s study also reveals some strong commonalities in the three perspectives.

All stakeholders have four common beliefs. First, internships should enhance placement opportunities for the interns; second, internship programs are a way to develop and maintain relationships between business and universities; third, internships should help participating employers in recruiting and selecting new full-time employees; and the last that the final semester students

are as ready as new graduates to take on work (Alpert, et al, 2009, page 40). Also, all parties strongly agree that internships should benefit the company, students and university equally. By focusing on agreeable items, goals can be defined to meet the interests of all three parties. The College of Business and Economics at the University of Idaho provides a menu of options for assignments around two categories of objectives: practical and reflective. This allows students to work with their employers and internship advisor to focus on goals that suit each situation. Butler University (Templeton, 2012) has aligned the goals of its BIP with the Assurance of Learning (AOL) sought by the AACSB International's (AACSB) revised Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation. They use internship assignments to focus on the objectives of general business knowledge, global issues' importance in business, problem solving and thinking skills, and communication skills. The CSB at California State University, Fresno (Moghaddam, 2011), believes an effective internship program should be able to provide and/or enhance career preparation skills such as communication, academic, interpersonal and job acquisition. Our COBE focuses on students' personal growth, professional growth and skill development related to their discipline of study. Students are provided with a menu of learning outcomes in all three categories. With the help of their Academic Internship Director or their academic advisor and their employer, they choose what best fits their situation and interests.

Decision 5: What should be the structure of the program?

Alpert et al. (2009) consider structure to be another key fundamental component of a BIP. In the past, others have offered advice on the design of BIP as well (Elyer, 1993; Hall et al., 1995; Joseph, 2003; Knouse, 2008; Knouse & Fontenot, 1999; Pianko, 1996; Rothman, 2007). This literature suggests that BIP design requires addressing issues related to the duration of the experience, the role of the director/coordinator, the nature of student work and student preparation, role of work-supervisor, and the methodology for awarding credit and documentation. Legal issues merit consideration as well (Swift & Kent, 1999).

Cooperative education (Co-op) and internships are the two oldest models of experiential education established at the University of Cincinnati in 1904 (Cook et al., 2004; Gault et al., 2000). The original co-op model required all students to alternate between paid full-time work and full-time school over a five-year period starting in the sophomore year. The model still prevails and has been adopted by some business schools at other institutions (Young et al., 2006). Internships, called by varied titles such as work-experience and practical training, tend to be more flexible. Thus the amount of time students are required to work can vary significantly among programs. The number of work hours required is an important characteristic of a program (Gault et al., 2000). Internship needs to be long enough for students to undertake meaningful projects and/or responsibilities and yield the benefits of professional and educational development. At the same time, expectations of all stakeholders have to be reasonable, as students have to balance internships with their other responsibilities especially during the school year. In the Alpert et al. study (2009), all three key stakeholders agreed that interns should work at the company for more than half of a week. In the USA that would translate into at least 20 hours a week and approximately 300 hours during an academic semester. Our COBE requires students to work a minimum of 225 hours (approximately two days a week) over a semester. The goal is to make it feasible for students to do internships during the regular semester while taking a full-load of classes, which might be on a MWF schedule. The majority of our students, however, do their internships over the summer and work 400-600 hours. Regardless of the hours worked, each experience can result in no more than three credit hours. In the past, take away projects have not been considered a good way for students to learn through internship (Alpert et al., 2009). In our COBE's internship program, however, it has been noticed that some employers continue to employ student past their internship by letting them work remotely and students find the arrangement suitable for their needs. It does beg the question if with the technological advancements and emerging new jobs, is it acceptable for students to intern remotely and harvest the same benefits? There are employers such as The AroundCampus Group that after intense week-long training and orientation at their corporate offices, have students work from their respective university campuses.

The role of director (also called internship advisor, or internship coordinator in some programs) is considered crucial for the success of the program. Knouse et al. (1999) advocate appointment of a college-level Internship Director, even if there is a good Career Service Center. The Updyke and Sander survey (2005) indicates that most programs have a single designated person even though titles can vary widely, and the position can be held by a faculty member, or a high or low-level staff member. According to Hall et al. (1995), an ideal Internship Director performs three important roles. First, the advisor helps students define their internship goals and insure academic quality of internship; second, maintains contact with the interns to help maximize their learning opportunities, and provide counseling; and finally, establishes procedures for evaluating the internship experience. Divine et al. (2007) believe that finding an effective director can be difficult because the position requires a unique combination of skills (e.g., selling, mentoring, advising, networking, conflict resolution, teaching and planning), knowledge (e.g., various academic discipline in business and field of career development) and industry contacts. The position is a unique combination of non-traditional teaching (i.e., one-on-one student interaction rather than classroom teaching) and non-traditional administrative responsibilities (i.e., managing relationships instead of budget or personnel), which can make it unattractive to both academics and administrators. Alpert et al. (2009) note that administering an internship program is neither easy nor simple. Divine et al. (2007) state that when transitioning from an elective to required internship program, the role of existing director will have to be expanded or external candidate hired through search, which requires considerable commitment of time and resources. In my case, the fit was natural for COBE and me as I transitioned into teaching after being a full-time interim dean for two years.

The importance of challenging and meaningful work for student development is well supported in internship literature (Alpert et al. 2009, Rothman, 2007). Interns have less time than full-time employees to learn about the job and company. Goal clarity helps learners direct their efforts effectively, and it is critical feature of an effectively structured internships. Well-defined tasks and clear goals are especially critical for inexperienced short-term workers such as undergraduate interns (Beenen & Mrousseau, 2010). The requirement of a well-developed job description by the employer can be used by a BIP to ensure the

company is clear on the set of job responsibilities or projects for the intern. Also, many programs use Standardized Internship Contracts (Alpert et al.). The contract that is signed by the student, Internship Director and the employer ensures agreement on key elements of the internship including intern's learning goals, job responsibilities and performance assessment. In addition, the frequency of contact with the interns is an issue that would need to be addressed while designing a BIP. Programs vary from having the Internship Director visit each internship site during student employment (Updyke & Sander, 2005) to contact with student through other means such as e-mail, phone or submission of periodic reports (Tovey, 2001). The level of frequency of contact can vary among programs, but there is some agreement among stakeholders that a monthly contact is desirable (Alpert et al., 2009, page 42).

In addition to having meaningful work, students also need frequent feedback and continuous support (Narayanan et al., 2010). The program should expect employers to provide effective orientation, supervision as well as mentoring of students (Tovey, 2001). When a program such as the one at California State University, Fresno, works with a select set of employers on an ongoing basis (Moghaddam, 2011), pre-specified criteria can be used during the selection process of employers or during their orientation upon selection. Non-elite or schools located where employers are not in abundance might not enjoy such a luxury. The list of employers can vary drastically from semester to semester for these schools. In such cases, providing the employers with written expectations along with the internship contract is a good option. Such is the case with the technical writing program of the East Carolina University (Tovey, 2001). Our COBE sends its expectations to employers when a student is deciphering the details of the internship documentation. This requires the Internship Director to work closely with each student and employer. The frequency and the nature of contact between the director and the employer, and the student can be structured. COBE requires employers and students to respond to at least two surveys each during the duration of internship. There are other programs that require a student to register for a class that meets regularly or periodically and serves as a vehicle for students to exhibit their learning and for the director (or faculty in respective departments) to assess the student learning. The level of available support as well as resources can determine the nature and the extent of contact among the key stakeholders. In the Updyke and Sander (2005) survey, only 16% schools provided separate or extra compensation to faculty for their internship related work, and 40% included internship responsibilities as part of their course load. The design of a required BIP requires balancing of such challenging choices for schools with limited resources.

Regardless of the size of the school, there are documents that are common to many BIP. Internship contract or learning agreement is one of those documents. Such a document is considered vital for congruence of expectations among all stakeholders (Alpert et al., 2009). It should involve elements of learning outcomes, job responsibilities/projects, work hours and duration, compensation and assessment (Knouse et al., 1999). The University of Idaho's COBE requires employers to write a formal letter with this information. Regardless of the instrument used, such commitment is finalized prior to the start of the job at the beginning of the semester in which credit is sought by the student. Another important document is a Liability Release Form. A greater use of internships has brought forth legal issues related to employment law and liability for both employers and business schools (Swift & Kent, 1999). Hence consultation with the university's attorneys is prudent, especially to design the liability release form commonly used to limit school liability in cases such as student injury on the job, student behavior on the job causing harm to others, or a traffic accident on the way to work. Paid internships reduce the school's liability as paid interns have the status of an employee. It can, however, be lawful to have un-paid internships as long as federal guidelines are met, but the issue has been challenged in courts and some courts have found unpaid interns to have the same rights as the company employees. It is a legal obligation of the business school to inform employers of their responsibilities and obligations toward interns and to advise students of their rights under EEOC legislation (Swift & Kent, 1999). Release agreements are not fool proof but they are an important document, which should be designed with the help of the university's attorneys. Our COBE has used such a document even before implementing the required BIP in 2008. Also, as a rule, we never sign a liability waiver form with any employer and inform our employers that internships need to be paid.

Decision 6: How to assess the student performance?

How to assess and grade student performance is a very fundamental component of a BIP (Alpert et. al, 2009) to preserve its academic legitimacy. According to Updyke and Sander (2005), assessment involves issues such as, if a letter grade is assigned, the nature of student assignments and who evaluates the assignments. In their survey of AACSB schools, the range of credit hours awarded for an internship varied from zero to four though Templeton et al. (2012) note that typically schools award three credit hours. As per Updyke and Sander survey, a majority used pass/fail or similar grading option and did not consider work experience or academic requirements as input for grading. Over 80% of them required employers to evaluate student performance, and 87% of these schools used the employer evaluation in the determination of student grade. In the Alpert et al. survey (2009), students, academics and work-supervisors agree that supervisor evaluation should receive 25-33% of the weight in the grade. Butler University's College of Business weighs supervisor evaluations at 30% (Templeton et al., 2012). Only 31% the schools in the Updyke and Sander survey awarded a letter grade and a majority of these used a combination of work component and academic component to determine the letter grade. In a more recent survey, 43% indicated that internship results in a letter grade (Templeton et al., 2012). In the Updyke and Sander survey, the academic component is dominated by written reports. Written reports can include daily journals of insights gained and lessons learned, a paper drawing connections between their internship and course content (Alpert et al., 2009; Clark, 2003) or personal reflection on professional and skill development. Work component can consist of supervisor's evaluations, sample of projects completed, reports related to work duties, and a summary of activities on a periodic basis. A smaller percentage of schools also used oral presentations and interactive group exercises based on work experience (Templeton et al., 2012). Academics, managers and students exhibit close agreement in their preference for using written reports evaluated by academics and supervisor evaluations for assessing student performance, though the students have the highest

preference for assessment by work supervisors using employee style evaluations. Both students and academics exhibit lower preference for oral presentations (Alpert et al. 2009). A majority (78%) of the programs report involvement of faculty in the program (Updyke & Sander, 2005), and 90% report grading of student work by business faculty (Templeton et al., 2012). At the University of Idaho's COBE, a faculty member is assigned to advise and mentor student interns, verify the quality of work experience and assess if the academic assignment are of passing quality (Clark, 2003). Awarding of letter grades and involvement of faculty are on the rise though key stakeholders agree that work performance should be assessed by a company supervisor (Alpert et al., 2009). A trend evolving over the last two decades suggests internships might have evolved as a tool for business education but now they are being perceived as a vehicle for employment underemphasizing the need for readings and papers (Cannon & Arnold, 1998).

In recent years, as the business school accreditation standards require demonstration of student learning, internships are also being used for programmatic assessment (Templeton et al., 2012). In the Templeton et al. survey, 23% of the schools reported using activities related to internships for Assurance of Learning (AOL) purposes. The College of Business (COB) at Butler University is among those schools that used internships as a platform to provide AOL in line with the AACSB accreditation standards. At Butler University's COB, student learning is assessed against learning objectives related to general business concepts, functional business concepts, global issues, teamwork and leadership, problem solving and critical thinking, and communication. Students are required to complete two internships – one in their junior year and the second in their senior year. Seventy percent of the grade is based on students' academic work and 30% on the evaluation of the student's performance. At our COBE, an ACBSP accredited school, student-learning outcomes (SLO) are assessed through employer surveys which provide feedback on students' skills related to communication, leadership and teamwork, as well as students' use of business knowledge, ethics and analytical and quantitative skills. Student grades, however, are determined based on students' internship portfolio. An internship portfolio consists of an internship summary, contextual understanding of student's role in the company, analytical and reflective descriptions of student's projects, including the relationship with learning outcomes and a resume. Supervisor evaluations do not directly affect the grade as long as they are at least satisfactory. At our COBE, students are required to participate in one experience, though more than fifty percent report doing multiple experiences. It is noticeable that at some schools grading and assessment are done separately. Individuals other than those assigning the grade generate assessment data. Such practice is in line with what is being advocated as sound practice for AOL (Martell, 2007). Required internships, in addition to getting data on student learning from an independent source, also assist with assessment of entire program rather than a specific course. The use of course- embedded assessment is considered not ideal for AOL (Martell, 2007). It is suggested that internships provide a better platform for program assessment rather than the alternatives commonly used such as a capstone business strategy course. The potential of required BIP programs for programmatic assessment of student learning as required by the accreditation assessment is underexplored or underutilized (Templeton et al., 2012).

Decision 7: How to manage other issues exclusive to required BIP?

Required internships can create issues that are not present in elective internships. In elective internship programs, the requirement of a high GPA can be used to screen students for the program, which could not be the case in a required program. Similarly, students with low GPAs may not succeed in obtaining internships that are worthy of course credit. The potential to lower the academic standards exists.

Co-ops programs have successfully handled these issues for many decades. Non-coop models such as the one at Butler University' COB also have a track record of success for two decades. As part of Northeastern's co-op program, students are required to participate in activities related to self-assessment, career exploration, decision making and appropriate level of goal setting (Young et al., 2006). Such preparation and guidance by a professional co-op coordinator leads to "activity," they note. For the first internship at the COB of Butler University, students must achieve junior status, finish at least twelve hours of upper-level business courses, and earn at least a C- in the first upper-level course in their major (Templeton et al., 2012). Such standards are achievable because they are in line with graduation requirements for all students. Yet another model uses a project approach where students undertake industry projects in their final year under the guidance of a faculty member (Narayanan et al., 2010). The common factor among these programs is their structured nature. Structure can be in the form an internship class (Templeton et al., 2012), a set of required activities and exercises (Young et al., 2006), or written policies, procedures and processes (Narayanan et al., 2010). Interestingly, student attitudes toward internships is considered a better predictor of student success than GPA and previous course work (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). Others have suggested that quality of supervision, company policies, and a student's positive attitude are the three most important determinants of internship success (Bear & Morton, 1999). GPA should not be the sole criterion for acceptance into an internship program (Cook et al., 2004). Hence the involvement of students with lower GPAs is not a hurdle.

In its transition from an elective program to a required BIP, our COBE created a two-tier system. The students with a GPA of 2.5 or higher with a sophomore status or higher can earn three hours of credit. Juniors or seniors with lower GPA can earn only zero credit hour. The zero credit hour option is also helpful in addressing another challenge of the required BIP – its cost to students in the form of fee for credit hours. In light of debate about the affordability of college education, the issue of cost is important. Seventy percent of our business students complete their internship during the summer. Registering for internship credit hours during the summer semester costs same as taking any three-hour class. The zero credit hour option gives students a choice. Another choice students have is to work during the summer but register for credit in the fall semester when the internship portfolio is completed and submitted. This way tuition fees cover the cost of the internship course.

Student demographics (e.g., international students and athletes) can be challenging for a required internship program (Divine et al., 2007). It is challenging to find internships in the USA for international students and their work visa status is another

factor of complexity. Our COBE has relied on students doing their internships in their home country for zero credit since screening of employers and having close contact can be challenges because of distance and language barriers. On-campus internships in departments such as athletics, global education, the budget office, the business office, catering, cafeteria, career services, student services, rec center, marketing and human resources have been viable options for both international students and athletes who are another segment that have limited time windows in a year for internships. The use of 225 hours is helpful with athletes since they can finish a full-time internship in less than six weeks, which they accommodate during off-season at the beginning of summer for most sports.

If the school is not close to many employers, it is a cause for concern as well (Divine et al., 2007). Our COBE is located in a small town with an hour drive to metro areas. Moreover, the program went into effect in 2008 when the unemployment rate surged to historic high levels. The program has been sustainable and effective because most students do their internships in summer, relationships with local industry are well established, part-time internships meet the requirement, and a stronger bond with the campus Career Services has been forged. Also, it has been noted that the size of a company is not related to any process or outcome variables in the model of an effective internship program (Narayanan et al., 2010). The inclusion of small businesses from the around the area has been a strength of the program. In a survey, when asked if they would recommend their internship to another student, over 85% students said yes and over 13% said maybe (Pittenger & Jacobs, 2013). A closer and stronger relationship with the university Career Services has also been very helpful in preparing and placing students. Assistance of Career Services results in efficiencies which can also address the challenge of declining budgets for smaller schools in this challenging times for higher education.

In general, required internship programs must have flexibility to accommodate a wide range of student interests, abilities, demographics and majors, as well as different preferences and objectives of the various stakeholders.

SUMMARY

In light of the well-chronicled benefits of internships, business schools must implement or transition from elective internship programs to required BIPs. All business students deserve to reap the professional and education benefits from internships. There are many challenges in the path of such a transition, but it is practical to make the leap. Even those schools that may not see themselves as best candidates can implement a required BIP with some ingenuity and flexibility. The benefits of such a program extend beyond the students. BIPs are a forum for objective and meaningful assessment of entire programs. Also, they are vehicles for building bridges with key constitutions and receive practitioner input on curricula. Enhanced collaboration with industry, government agencies, other educational partners, community organizations, trustees and advisory boards as well as campus departments yields many unexpected benefits for all the key stakeholders.

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