

Co-op and Internship Task Force Report

Bowling Green State University

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page
Executive Summary	3
Co-op and Internship Task Force Charge	4
Operational Definitions of Co-op, Internship, and Related Experiences	4
<i><u>Definition of Co-op (Cooperative Education)</u></i>	
<i><u>Definition of Internship</u></i>	
<i><u>Definition of Clinical</u></i>	
<i><u>Definition of Practicum</u></i>	
<i><u>Definition of Student Teaching</u></i>	
<i><u>Professional and Community Engagement</u></i>	
Co-op and Internship Variables and Factors	6
<i><u>Course Designations</u></i>	
<i><u>Required/Optional/No Option Available</u></i>	
<i><u>Course Credit and Clock Hours</u></i>	
<i><u>Grades</u></i>	
<i><u>Faculty Time and Compensation</u></i>	
<i><u>Student Compensation</u></i>	
<i><u>Method of Instruction</u></i>	
<i><u>On- or Off-Campus Experiences</u></i>	
Creating a Technological and Human Resource Infrastructure	10
<i><u>Tracking and Reporting</u></i>	
<i><u>Technology</u></i>	
<i><u>Human Resources: Directors, Direct Service Providers, etc.</u></i>	
<i><u>Faculty/Staff Time</u></i>	
Communication	13
Connecting Students to Opportunities	15
<i><u>Programming</u></i>	
Conclusion	16
Co-op and Internship Task Force Committee Members	17
Appendices	
<i><u>Appendix A: 2008-2012 Co-ops and Internships by College</u></i>	
<i><u>Appendix B: BGSU 2008-2012 Co-op and Internship Data</u></i>	
<i><u>Appendix C: Contact Hour/Credit Hour Requirements</u></i>	
<i><u>Appendix D: Legal Considerations</u></i>	
<i><u>Appendix E: Department of Labor Fact Sheet -Unpaid Internships</u></i>	
<i><u>Appendix F: NACE Ethical Standards – Preferential Referral</u></i>	

Executive Summary

BGSU lacks aggregate information and campus-wide coordination regarding co-ops and internships. In evaluating the current co-op and internship programs across campus, and there are many, it was apparent that there are inconsistencies in credit hours, contact hours, internship and co-op requirements, dedicated human resources, data gathering, reporting, job databases, compliance with state and federal law, processes, procedures, etc.

The Provost's Co-op and Internship Task Force charge (see page 4) provided a structure by which this Task Force was able to evaluate the current status of co-ops and internships and ultimately provide recommendations. Within this report, the Task Force, with representation from all colleges and various departments, has provided operational definitions for co-ops and internships, important co-op and internship variables and factors, a technological and human resource infrastructure, a communication model, and recommendations to enhance and coordinate a University co-op and internship program.

Given the work of this Task Force, we recommend that key departments and offices collaborate to implement the following recommendations as specifically delineated in this report:

1. Obtain campus-wide buy-in for a unified co-op and internship program;
2. Enact an aggregate data gathering and reporting system using a single recruiting and job posting system (see pages 10-11, 13-15);
3. Create a sustainable technological and human resource infrastructure (see pages 11-13);
4. Assess effectiveness and learning outcomes of the University co-op and internship program (see page 9);
5. Enhance employer relationships leading to increased opportunities for co-ops and internships (see pages 12-14).

It is important to note that the University System of Ohio has created metrics by which universities will be funded. One of the metrics is to increase the number of co-ops and internships. In the near future, the Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR) will release an RFP for co-ops and internships, providing an opportunity for universities and colleges to partner with businesses and agencies to increase participation in co-ops and internships. Substantial funding has been secured and allocated by OBOR from casino licensing fees for this purpose, per Zach Waymer, OBOR Director of Economic Advancement. This report and the future implementation of these recommendations will align with the state's timeline for co-op and internship initiatives.

Co-op and Internship Task Force Charge

The Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Rodney Rogers, formed the Co-op and Internship Task Force (CITF) with selected committee members to increase the percentage of students participating in co-ops and internships and to increase student engagement in applied learning. The Co-op and Internship Task Force committee is providing recommendations that result in:

1. A campus-wide system by which all BGSU students can identify internships/co-op opportunities that strengthen and support their academic programs;
2. Tracking and reporting student participation;
3. Assessment of student learning;
4. Reporting of co-op and internship data (student and employer);
5. Strengthening of relationships among students, employers, and BGSU.

In order for this effort to have a successful outcome, the members of the task force were asked to

1. Evaluate the status of cooperative education and internships at the University;
2. Recommend an infrastructure to document and track all BGSU co-ops and internships;
3. Recommend enhanced services and opportunities for students such as:
 - a. Creating a unified and efficient (recruiting) system to communicate internships/co-ops;
 - b. Creating a system that will actively connect students with specific internship opportunities;
 - c. Creating a database of students interested in specific types of internship experiences leading to a strategic development of organizations with these types of experiences;
4. Enhance existing University internship processes and procedures;
5. Identify best practices and “blue skying” new practices.

The selected members of the Co-op and Internship Task Force (see page 16) met ten times from March 16, 2012 – May 25, 2012 for hourly meetings. With representation from each college and key BGSU stakeholders, the members participated in discussions regarding the charge, writing and editing, and contributions to a BGSU Wiki, which was utilized for efficient project management and ongoing communication. This Co-op and Internship Task Force Report addresses the current status of BGSU’s co-op and internship programs and suggests enhancements to services, processes and procedures, and assessment and tracking of co-ops and internships per the charge of the Task Force. As you review this report, you will find content-specific recommendations noted throughout the document as indicated by this notation:

- **Recommendation:** _____

Operational Definitions of Co-op, Internship, and Related Experiences

In order for the Co-op and Internship Task Force (CITF) to address the charge as outlined and evaluate the status of co-ops and internships campus-wide, it was necessary to broadly define “professional practice” courses and include not only co-ops and internships, but clinical, practicum, and student teaching courses (see Appendices A and B) as part of this broad definition.

Co-ops and internships are three-way partnerships among students, Bowling Green State University (BGSU), and supervisors (employers/agencies) of professional practice in their various forms (e.g., internship, co-op, clinical, practicum, and student teaching). These professional practice experiences are registered as courses. They may be paid or unpaid and are related to academic majors and/or intended career goals. Any further references to “co-ops and internships” will encompass the subsequent definitions.

- **Recommendation:** Use definitions noted below universally and modify current course titles and descriptions to reflect these definitions.

Definition of Co-op (Cooperative Education):

A partnership between students, BGSU, and employers/agencies that meets the following conditions:

- The co-op has a specified and definite duration with dates corresponding to academic calendar.
- The student's performance is evaluated from the perspective of both BGSU and the employer.
- The employer/agency typically provides students with compensation, in the form of stipends, wages, or salaries.
- Includes work integrated learning outcomes and assignments.
- Aligns with students' major and/or career goals.
- Enrolled in a course that typically includes course credit.
- Alternates or combines periods of academic study and work experience in appropriate fields as an integral part of education.
- Multiple experiences are completed with each co-op increasing in responsibility.
- A recurring relationship is typically formed between employers and students.

Definition of Internship:

A partnership between students, BGSU, and employers/agencies that meets the following conditions:

- The internship has a specified and definite duration with dates corresponding to academic calendar.
- The student's performance is evaluated from the perspective of both BGSU and the employer.
- The company/agency employer may provide students with compensation, in the form of stipends, wages, or salaries.
- Includes work integrated learning outcomes and assignments.
- Aligns with students' major and/or career goals.
- Enrolled in a course that typically includes course credit.

Definition of Clinical:

A partnership between students, BGSU, and employer/agency supervisors providing an experience that involves working with patients, clients, or in laboratory settings. These are typically unpaid training experiences. Clinical courses often lead to certification in the field by providing the necessary experience.

Definition of Practicum:

A partnership between students, BGSU, and supervisors that focus study within a specialized field of practice in which students can apply practical application and theory to "real life" scenarios. These are typically unpaid, short-term experiences. Practica may be considered introductions to the workplace, and can be a preliminary step to an internship.

Definition of Student Teaching:

A partnership between students, BGSU, and cooperating teachers providing classroom teaching under supervision on full-time basis. Students follow the calendar and hours of the assigned school. These are typically unpaid experiences. Student teaching often leads to certification in the field by providing the necessary experience.

Professional and Community Engagement:

Other types of experiential learning is consider significant, but does not fit within the previously defined “co-op and internship” professional practice activities, yet are acknowledged to be academic and professional activities related to students’ career development and goals. These experiences include research, independent study, field experience, and service-learning. While considered relevant work experiences, there are inconsistencies in the work intensity and duration of the experience. Therefore, any subsequent reference to “co-ops and internships” will exclude these experiences.

There are other experiential learning activities also considered significant and relevant to career goals, but these are not documented as courses due to policy (i.e., second internships such as COOP 50, more than one telecommunications internship), or the nature of the activity (i.e., volunteering, externships, student organizational involvement, leadership roles, etc.). These also will be excluded from subsequent references to “co-ops and internships”.

Co-op and Internship Variables and Factors

Internships are considered high-impact experiences because they benefit college students, as noted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ 2008 report *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Them, and Why They Matter*. Furthermore, the Conference Board, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resource Management created a 2006 report entitled *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers’ Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce*. In this report, employers indicated that there is a deficit in essential skills (e.g., professionalism/work ethic, verbal and written communication, teamwork/collaboration, and critical thinking/problem solving) needed to succeed in the workplace; however, meaningful internships can provide real world experience to develop these essential skills.

Internships are vital to students’ success in the job market. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) *2012 Internship & Co-op Survey* documented that 61.2% of employers made full-time offers to their interns. Additionally, the NACE *2012 Internship & Co-op Survey* illustrated that “employers expect to increase internship hiring by almost 9 percent and co-op hiring by about 8 percent. Of their total 2011-12 expected new college hires, more than 40 percent will come from employers’ own internship and co-op programs.” Regarding hiring preferences, 73.7% of employers prefer to hire candidates with relevant work experience, and more than half (55%) of those employers prefer that work experience to be an internship or co-op (NACE Job Outlook 2012).

To increase co-op and internship participation by students, we must first consider several variables and factors as they relate to the current status of professional practice at BGSU. The variability among these factors is great; hence, the need for consistency and the subsequent recommendations. The following factors are addressed below:

- Course Designations
- Required/Optional/No Option Available
- Course Credit and Clock Hours
- Grades
- Faculty Time and Compensation
- Student Compensation
- Method of Instruction
- On- or Off-Campus Experiences

Course Designations

Course designations vary by course. As it relates to ease of identification of co-op and internship courses, there are no universal identifiers within course designations or course descriptions that allow for efficient data collection and reporting across all programs. Without a consistent course designation system, obtaining aggregate data is extremely challenging as only the individual instructors know the nature of their courses. Certain disciplines denote their co-op/internship courses by ending in XX89 - a known practice, but not a University policy. Others do not utilize this practice.

- **Recommendation:** Establish a policy regarding the tracking of co-ops and internships and related experiences. Policy could encompass the following:
 - Use specified course designations (e.g., XX89 as call number for co-ops and internships and other designations for practica, clinicals, and student teaching).
 - Use course descriptions to identify the type of course (e.g., co-op, internship, practicum, clinical, etc.), credit hours, and contact hours.
 - Flag co-op and internship courses via Registration and Records.
 - Create a search mechanism for courses that fall into co-op and internship categories.

Required/Optional/No Option Available

BGSU main campus has 213 distinct majors that lead to degrees and the Firelands campus has 26. It is difficult to determine how many programs have required, optional, or unavailable co-ops and internships (meaning, no internship/co-op course designation is “on the books”).

- **Recommendation:** Include “optional” internship/co-op courses on all college degree program check sheets that do not require internships/co-ops to increase student awareness that every student has the option of completing a co-op or internship.

Course Credit and Clock Hours

Internship/co-op credit hours and contact hours (total hours worked) vary within a particular course and by program, ranging from zero to 15 credit hours per semester. Likewise, contact hours range from 60 to 600 hours per term. Internships and co-ops may be part-time or full-time (40 hours or more per week). Currently, there is no consistency across the University for clock hours aligning with credit hours. For example, there are students who take 12 credit hours to maintain full-time student status so as not to compromise their financial aid, insurance, etc., while other programs offer full-time student status and financial aid, but are less than 12 credits (e.g., COOP 50 is zero credit and TECH 2890, 3890, 4890 are four credit hours). It is important to note that both COOP 50 and TECH 2890, 3890, and 4890 are used by any student from any college to register co-ops or internships. Registration and Records uses a formula for “Credit Hour – Contact Hour Requirements” created by the Ohio Board of Regents (see Appendix C); however, it excludes internships, co-ops, and student teaching.

- **Recommendation:** Create a formula that includes internships, co-ops, and student teaching to be used by Registration and Records in order to compile aggregate data.
- **Recommendation:** Create consistency between credit hours and contact hours across all disciplines.
- **Recommendation:** Apply full-time student status for all co-ops and internships, so all students can benefit equally.
- **Recommendation:** Identify a University-wide policy regarding liability insurance and apply it to all students who qualify for its use (see Appendix D).

Grades

Internship and co-op grades range from satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) to the typical grading scale (A-F). Academic rigor varies from intensive course assignments to no course assignments. Course assignments include, but are not limited to reflective blogging and journaling, capstone/research papers, and skill development reports as defined by identified learning outcomes or certification standards. Grades may be impacted by faculty site visits/observations, employer evaluation of student performance, and student evaluation of the workplace experience. The amount of faculty interaction during the co-op or internship varies greatly from no interaction to faculty correspondence to site visits (virtual or on-site).

Faculty Time and Compensation

The time committed to administering co-ops and internships is an important consideration. Duties for the administration of co-ops and internships include, but are not limited to the teaching of the course (assignments related to the co-op and internship experience, which is distinguished from a co-op and internship preparation course); approval of employer generated internship/co-op job postings; approval of student generated internships/co-ops; applications of students; increasing the number of applicants as needed; the registration of students into a co-op/internship course; the approval of the internship/co-op site; management of a three way agreement among the employer/agency, the student, and the University with identified learning outcomes; tracking of liability waiver; addressing workplace issues (e.g., student adjustment, renege on accepted internships, poor performance, workplace conflict, student terminations, employer issues, etc.); informing employers of adherence to Fair Labor Standard Act, six criteria for unpaid internships, and other legal issues; informing faculty and staff of EEO/preferential referrals; coordinating promotion of internship/co-op opportunities; collaborating with Career Center on job/internship fairs and other co-op and internship programs; and managing orientation of new student interns.

Some programs have required internships with specific standards for supervising faculty/staff as stipulated by their professional organizations. Examples include:

- Human Development and Family Studies internship meets program approval from the National Council on Family Relations
- Sports Management internship and practicum meets approval by Sport Management Program Review Council, the National Association of Sport and Physical Education, and the North American Society for Sport Management
- Dietetics granted Initial Accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the American Dietetics Association
- Journalism and Public Relations, accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, require two internships
- Teacher preparation majors must meet NCATE standards that lead to licensure based on student teaching and practicum/field experiences
- Social Work internships must meet accreditation standards set by the National Council on Social Work Education

Other colleges continue to maintain their required experiences and help students locate employer sites. The College of Technology has a long-standing required co-op program for all students in the College. Currently, their Co-Op office coordinates student co-op advising and securing co-op positions. Faculty are integrated into the Co-Op program by conducting site visits and grading the co-op experience for each student. These duties performed by faculty are counted into their course load for that semester.

- **Recommendation:** Fund permanent positions at the program/college level for internship and co-op coordination and implementation.

Student Compensation

Internships and co-ops are either paid or unpaid. Typically, the majority of co-op experiences are paid, and payment can come in a variety of formats (e.g., hourly wage, stipends, commission, etc.). Generally, non-profit organizations and student teaching placements do not pay interns. Unpaid internships for for-profit companies are required to meet the six Federal Guidelines to qualify as unpaid internships (see Appendix E). Based on specific industries and fields, CITF acknowledges there will always be unpaid internships. It is important to note that there is financial hardship with regard to many students who work in unpaid internships or student teaching assignments. In many cases, students must register and pay for full-time credit hours while working at a distance (e.g., incurring cost of living expenses) and not receiving income. Simultaneously, there are students who register for zero or less than full-time credit hours (e.g., COOP 50 and TECH 2890, 3890, 4890), maintain full-time student status, earn an income, and do not pay for credit hours or pay for minimal credit hours. Students are aware that all co-op and internship courses do not bear the same financial burden.

- **Recommendation:** Create consistency with credit hour cost and full-time student status.
- **Recommendation:** Develop supplemental student income through private donations and scholarships.
 - The Deans should consider adding this as a priority for their campaigns.
- **Recommendation:** Increase faculty/staff site visits to co-op and internship locations, creating opportunities to personally interact with and strengthen employer relations, leading to increased funding/scholarship opportunities as contributed by employers.

Method of Instruction

By their very nature, co-op and internship courses utilize the work environment as the “classroom”. It is important to consider an opportunity for co-op students and interns to take courses while working part-time or full-time if feasible. This would aid in reducing time to graduation.

- **Recommendation:** Increase online/blended course offerings for upper level students (i.e., juniors, seniors) to take while interning, using a strategic/college-developed approach.

Assessment of internships and co-ops varies greatly across the University. Some programs/disciplines have robust, continuous assessment plans, while others are limited, due to the lack of resources. Some internships, for example, are only assessed upon completion through an evaluation form filled out by the employer and the student.

- **Recommendation:** Strengthen the internship and co-op assessment processes among departments who would like to conduct more thorough assessment or are required to do so by accreditation standards. This could be done through course releases or the assignment of full-time internship and co-op advisors.
- **Recommendation:** Assess learning outcomes gained from the internship/co-op experience.

On- or Off-Campus Experiences

Students may be enrolled in co-ops or internships on- or off-campus. There is an opportunity to review certain student jobs using internship and co-op criteria to determine if these student employment opportunities qualify as such. For example, an event planning major who is working on events for the Bowen-Thompson Student Union could utilize this job as an internship as it relates to the student’s major and/or career goals.

- **Recommendation:** Expand and support growth of both on- and off-campus internships.

Creating a Technological and Human Resource Infrastructure

This section of the report will not only attempt to outline an infrastructure that documents and tracks co-op and internship data university-wide, but suggests a human resource infrastructure to support data collection, reporting, assessment of learning, and enhanced services to students and employers.

Tracking and Reporting

During the 2011-2012 academic year, 4040 students were enrolled in co-op and internship courses (see Appendices A and B). Gathering this data took weeks of collaboration between the Career Center and Registration and Records, confirmation from the College Deans, and a final review by the college faculty and administrators to generate what we believe is to the most accurate data to date.

- **Recommendation:** Create a comprehensive and efficient tracking and reporting system for co-ops and internships.

Over the course of the last four years, the number of students registered for co-op and internship experiences University-wide has declined by 18.1% (-895) revealing a dramatic decline in documented experiential learning. This trend varies significantly between individual colleges and programs, as some have shown less decline or even growth in this same period. While the economy was challenging in the last four years, student enrollment at BGSU increased during this time period. Although the economy could explain some of this decrease, it is believed there are many students who have co-op and internship experiences that are not registered as courses (i.e., seniors who use their final semester at BGSU to complete an internship/co-op and are not enrolled in any courses during the time period).

There are a variety of programs/departments/faculty already coordinating co-ops and internships. At present, individual degree programs or colleges have developed informal or formal infrastructures to support their co-op and internship efforts. Given that these structures have developed independently, there is no unified process to document and track all co-ops and internships in aggregate, thus making it difficult to report data and make informed decisions regarding such topics as: percent of students involved, average salaries, number of paid and unpaid internships, etc.

Using designated course identifiers that signify co-ops and internships can allow for data to be differentiated by type of professional practice (identifiers to be developed in concert with Registration & Records), as well as be utilized to report aggregate data by program, college, and the University. If BGSU is able to track professional practice courses such as the courses defined herein, then the University could further utilize these data as they relate to retention; degree of student engagement (i.e., subsequent experiential learning activities); time to graduation; assessment of student learning; internship/co-op placement rates by major, college, and University; and employment rates at the time of graduation.

- **Recommendation:** Utilize Registration and Records data to track and sort co-op and internship courses based on specific parameters (e.g., type, required/optional, compensation type, grade type, and credit and clock hours).
- **Recommendation:** Identify common elements BGSU co-op and internship experiences should have aligning with the identified definitions, such as learning outcomes, assignment types, supervision, reflection, etc.
- **Recommendation:** Give ownership of the COOP 50 (zero credit, graded S/U) designation to the colleges providing them with an optional, no credit transcript notation.

Technology

The technology systems used across campus to track co-ops and internship experiences vary greatly from individual databases housed by internship coordinators to sophisticated recruiting systems backed by national organizations. As a result, no single system is established and utilized campus-wide to document and report co-op and internship data. Currently, WorkNet, a recruiting and job database system powered by Symplicity, has the capability of tracking experiences with specific details and generating reports. A swipe-card system is also in place to track event and meeting participation (e.g., job and internship fair attendance, individual advising appointments, workshop participation, etc.). This system not only provides a job database for students with mobile capabilities for searching and applying to co-ops and internships, but a one-stop recruiting service for employers.

- **Recommendation:** Utilize WorkNet to track co-op and internship recruiting and career development activity data for BGSU. Doing so will centralize data in an existing BGSU system, allowing for quick and easy integration for use.
 - WorkNet is one of the most sophisticated recruiting systems and can be utilized now as it is currently in use. WorkNet is endorsed by NACE (the National Association of Colleges and employers). There is always the option to assess other systems in the future, should others prove to be more effective.

Preferential referrals, that is, providing the name of specific students to employers as candidates for positions, pose great legal concern. Without a formalized system for posting internships and co-ops, it is difficult to maintain “a recruiting process that is fair and equitable to candidates and employing organizations” (see Appendix F - NACE Ethical Standards). It is important to note that the consistent use of job posting/recruiting technology ensures compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity law and decreases the likelihood of preferential referrals by faculty and staff so as to allow all students who qualify equal opportunity to apply, thus decreasing the likelihood of discrimination and liability. Since all students are automatically enrolled in WorkNet, it provides equal opportunity for all students who qualify to apply for internship or co-op positions.

Human Resources: Directors, Direct Service Providers, etc.

Currently, human resources that support co-op and internship programs across the campus are inconsistent, and in some cases, have diminished greatly. In certain programs, administrators, staff, and/or faculty are assigned the coordination of co-op and internship programs without course releases or any additional compensation, while others are given course releases or included in their established teaching load. In other programs, the lack of permanent faculty and/or staff lines to coordinate internships and co-ops creates ongoing stress and uncertainty about the future coordination of internships, despite that fact that programs require them.

Other universities either have a centralized model (i.e., one director with programs in each college), decentralized (i.e., directors in each college with dedicated faculty/staff), or a mixed model whereby an upper administrator oversees the management of resources and programs with support to the college programs. Without dedicated administration for the complicated business of co-ops and internships, adding this responsibility to one’s current position may result in a decline in participation as has occurred in recent years (see Appendices A and B).

- **Recommendation:** Create permanent faculty/staff lines within the colleges to focus on managing the administrative, accreditation, and curricular functions of co-ops and internships.
- **Recommendation:** Create a high-level university position such as an Associate Vice Provost (AVP) of Career Development, Internships, Co-Ops, and Experiential Learning to develop a strategic plan that includes implementing the recommendations provided in this report and assessing the

impact and effectiveness of a more centralized program. This individual would be instrumental in working directly with colleges/departments on their internship and co-op program needs. This person would work collaboratively with the Career Center, Deans, and co-op and internship program coordinators. It is imperative that this position be one of advocacy, to support the growth of co-ops and internships within the colleges and obtain needed resources to support this goal.

- Explore the University of Cincinnati's 100 year old co-op program, its administrative structure (Associate Vice Provost), and faculty support (Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Guidelines for Professional Practice).
- **Recommendations:** Create a separate office for Cooperative Education and Internship Program within Academic Affairs, with an upper-level administrator/faculty Director who reports to the AVP and manages the coordination of co-ops and internships. This individual would work with each college, which would have dedicated co-op/internship coordinators and support staff whose sole mission is to administer a structured co-op and internship college program. Roles would include, but are not limited to:
 - Faculty advisors or appropriate personnel will oversee internships/co-ops and report internship/co-op information to school/department coordinator.
 - Internship/co-op coordinators would be responsible for tracking internships/co-ops and for working with Associate Vice Provost of Career Development, Internships, Co-ops, and Experiential Learning in identifying types of internships needed for that unit.
 - AVP will serve as an advocate for the colleges and will help them obtain needed resources, collect all information, oversee centralized internship/co-op program, and share data with colleges and the Career Center.
 - Faculty time for co-ops and internships requires dedicated time. For some programs, a school or department coordinator is needed in order to provide greater assessment of the experience and meet accreditation or certification standards.
 - Technology Project Coordinator/Director to assist with and coordinate all aspects of data management, reporting, assessment, and new technology development to aid in all initiatives and efforts.
- **Recommendation:** Offer faculty advising training on internships/co-ops (vary by department).
- **Recommendation:** Create a reward structure to incentivize faculty and acknowledge expertise required for co-ops and internships.

The demand for student internships/co-ops needs to be balanced with the needs of employers. The cultivation of new employer/agency relationships and the enhancement of current relationships are critical to the mission of increasing co-op and internship opportunities for students. Time and human resources are required to develop these relationships and meet employer needs.

- **Recommendations:** Assess the current number of students in specific programs and the demand for internships/co-ops (required, suggested, or optional).
 - Conduct a needs assessment to identify students' career goals early in their academic career and to identify potential connections to internship/co-op opportunities.
 - Identify local, state, regional, and national organizations to meet student needs.
 - Once data is gathered and analyzed, we suggest creating a targeted employer development plan to identify metrics and balance the supply of students with industry demands. There is an opportunity to document the economic impacts of paid and unpaid interns/co-ops.
- **Recommendation:** Increase employer participation in career development programs (workshops, job fairs, Career Days, etc.).

- **Recommendation:** Develop a strategic employer Co-op and Internship Advisory Council. The Associate Vice Provost of Career Development, Internships, Co-Ops, and Experiential Learning will implement a successful employer development plan, which includes participation/leadership of the Advisory Council.

Faculty/Staff Time

The generation of Student Credit Hours (SCH) and the subsequent fund allocation is either directed to the colleges or to the general fund. In some cases, personnel (faculty or staff) are paid based on SCH generation. Should there be a decrease in credit hours due to (1) use of the COOP 50 (zero credit transcript notation) instead of other courses, (2) use of TECH 2890, 3890, 4890 as another option, or (3) reduction in credit hours registered by students should they get full-time status based on prior recommendation, this can jeopardize revenue that could be directed to the colleges to support personnel or the general fund.

- **Recommendation:** Allow course releases for faculty managing co-ops and internships or a full-time internship/co-op coordinator to be negotiated between dean and chair/director of each unit.
 - Consider SCH funds to be allocated to the colleges to directly support co-op and internship programs.

In some colleges, there is a strong history of internships, co-ops, and student teaching (e.g., College of Education and Human Development, College of Health and Human Services, and College of Technology) or by culture (e.g., College of Business). In recent years, some colleges have made additional efforts to increase internships. For example, the College of Business created a Business Career Accelerator program staffed by part-time faculty administrators, student workers, and a Career Center staff member.

- **Recommendation:** Create of a Co-op/Internship Advisory Board with representation across colleges and departments.
- **Recommendation:** Create a human resources plan by the college deans to support individual college goals for increasing co-ops and internships. Because each college varies in the number of required, optional, and unlisted co-ops and internships, only the deans know what is needed to meet their goals.
- **Recommendation:** Internship, co-op, practicum, clinical, and field experience faculty/staff become members of a learning community in which information, updates, and collaboration can occur.
- **Recommendation:** Fund permanent positions at the program/college level for internship and co-op coordination and implementation.
- **Recommendation:** Develop an online training module in which all faculty/staff supervisors of internships and co-ops must take to be trained on specific legal policies and procedures (e.g., equal opportunity law, six criteria for unpaid internships, three-way agreement, liability, etc.) as well as centralized reporting procedures.

Communication

As previously noted, there is no centralized co-op and internship recruiting system at BGSU. By default, there is also no centralized communication system regarding the promotion of internship/co-op services, programs, or postings. The promotion and communication of internships and co-ops to students varies by major, department, program, and method. For example, the Career Center uses both technology and human resources to promote opportunities. WorkNet showcases student jobs, internships, co-ops, and career (post-graduation) positions the office receives from employers. WorkNet

is available to all students via their MyBGSU web portal; and through this online database, students can search and apply for co-ops and internships and receive automated communications regarding positions that match their criteria. Furthermore, liaisons to each of the colleges communicate and “push” information to students, faculty, and staff in a variety of ways (e.g., social media, email, classroom presentations, listprocs, etc.). The Career Center has the only centralized communication system serving all students.

The College of Technology uses PlacePro, an online database of co-op related information, to post all of the technology co-ops they receive from their employer network. Staff members from the College of Technology Cooperative Education Program coordinate the posting of co-op positions. Only students in the College of Technology have access to PlacePro, and this online database will no longer be available within one year. Additionally, individual departments and programs, such as the School of Media and Communication, also have in-house databases and/or listprocs targeted for their particular majors/programs of study. Typically, the co-op and internship postings for these in-house databases and listprocs are not shared with other areas. Other programs have informal systems developed by faculty for communication to students within their disciplines. The lack of technological infrastructure makes it difficult to systematize opportunities and data.

Companies/agencies want to recruit BGSU students, and do so as efficiently as possible. They recruit through posting job opportunities, attending job and internship fairs, conducting on-campus interviews, engaging with faculty and staff through class presentations and programming efforts, and networking with students through information sessions and organization meetings. Without a campus-wide internship/co-op job database system, there is duplication of services and/or organizations being approached by multiple programs for internships/co-ops. Program specific databases and posting systems require program/department staff time to manage and maintain internship/co-op relationships, job postings and student preparation (e.g., applications, resume, interview preparation, etc.). Several departments/programs may approach the same company/agency at different times and without awareness of prior contacts. For instance, the College of Education and Human Development has noted various issues with non-teacher prep programs approaching public schools. These schools become “overburdened” with BGSU requests and perceive that BGSU does not coordinate its efforts.

Some companies/agencies may want to recruit students from a variety of majors. Currently, it is not efficient for employers to approach multiple programs, even if each program has its own database or internship posting system. There is no one point of contact for companies/agencies to post one internship/co-op position for many majors. This inefficiency can result in poor external relations and lack of adequate promotion of internship/co-op opportunities for students. Conversely, there is not a centralized database for students who qualify to search for positions that suit their major or career goals.

Knowledge and expertise varies widely across campus regarding co-op and internship opportunities, utilization of job search resources (e.g., websites, publications, professional networks, etc.), understanding of job market trends and opportunities, employer needs (i.e., competencies by industry/field of study), co-ops/internships job posting standards, employment law, and career development interventions (e.g., resume development, interviewing techniques, relevant student experience, etc.). If we are to create efficiencies in communication, then the need to share information with the campus community would benefit all parties.

- **Recommendation:** Utilize WorkNet, the aforementioned recruiting system, as a centralized communication system and “one-stop shop” for students and employers.

- Create a communication system by which information about co-op and internship opportunities is disseminated (e.g., liaison communicates to the Dean who communicates to the Chairs who communicates to faculty/staff who communicate to students or some other structure). Ideally, there will be personnel to identify students in need of experiential education opportunities to ensure messages are received.
- **Recommendation:** Manage campus-wide communications to companies/agencies to prevent duplication of efforts. Consider communication with all external constituents as they communicate with different departments (e.g., Athletics, Alumni and Development, Career Center, etc.).
- **Recommendation:** Create an institutional web page where students can access the online career/internship/co-op database.
- **Recommendations:** Create a strategic communication plan focused on media exposure (e.g., newspaper coverage and ads, Monitor articles, Zoom News articles, campus update information, signage, etc.) and social media (e.g., blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.).
 - Brand and promote WorkNet to companies/agencies, students, and BGSU faculty/staff.
 - Create a dynamic calendar available to the campus community showcasing college and Career Center recruiting events, such as on-campus interviews, programs, job and internship fairs, networking events, speakers, etc.
 - Provide BGSU promotional materials to external audiences, such as participation certificates, BGSU items (e.g., pens, mugs) and BGSU invitations to student networking, professional, and athletic events to increase BGSU presence.
- **Recommendations:** Create a data source to include the following: collaboration with Risk Management Office, Legal Counsel, Campus Police, Student Health Center, etc. Centralized administrative support with electronic database that would track all student documentation (see Appendix D).

Connecting Students to Opportunities

The BGSU Career Center offers WorkNet, available to all students via their MyBGSU web portal, smart phone or tablet, which showcases all internship, co-op, and career (post-graduation) positions. WorkNet offers a “saved search” feature that connects specific student interests with employer needs; whereas, students enter search criteria, such as keywords (e.g., job title, field, etc.), academic major, position type (e.g., co-op/internship, career [post-graduation], etc.), job function (e.g., accounting/auditing, construction, editorial, education, political/lobbying, sciences, etc.), and location (city, state, or country). Once the search criteria are identified, students can schedule the frequency (e.g., daily, weekly, or monthly) by which the search agent is run. As a result, students will receive automatic e-mail notification of new postings matching their search criteria delivered to them as frequently as they indicated (e.g., daily, monthly, or weekly). Additionally, students can run a search agent at any time to view employer/agency connections.

WorkNet has the potential to utilize students’ profile information and search agent data points (i.e., students’ identification of interests based on major, industry, job title, and key words) to create a database of specific kinds of internships. A report can be generated to identify student interests, thus allowing for strategic development of employer relationships based on student need.

- **Recommendation:** Research or develop smart technology applications that could be utilized for recruiting systems. Specifically, we recommend a system that uses information about students to make recommendations about potential internship/co-op opportunities. An example includes the current system in place, which tracks data using swipe card technology (student’s BGSU ID)

that can track involvement in organizations; prior job experience; identified interests, skills, career goals, etc.

The Alumni Office is a great resource for connecting students to alumni who are working in fields of interest leading to potential internships.

- **Recommendation:** Coordinate with alumni for additional co-op and internship opportunities, externships, and networking activities.

College co-op and internship faculty and staff are essential for marketing opportunities to students seeking co-op and internship experiences. These individuals can identify students who have not completed internship and co-op experiences and target them to participate in career development activities (e.g., career advising appointments, job/internship fairs, use of database, programming, etc.) resulting in internship and co-op attainment.

- **Recommendation:** Clarify roles and responsibilities of faculty and staff for co-op/internship connections. Additionally, it would be helpful to identify current partners and supporters of internships/co-ops across campus (e.g., academic advisors, career consultants, student supervisors, faculty members, etc.), so students know who to “turn to” when they want to discuss internship and co-op opportunities.

Programming

The University offers a variety of co-op and internship fairs and networking events throughout the academic year. Some events are specialized and coordinated by specific programs (e.g., social work, sports management, human development and family studies, etc.). Other events have a general focus and are open to students of all majors (e.g., Career Center job and internship fairs). In addition, employer programs (e.g., workshops, panels, information sessions, etc.) provide excellent opportunities for students to actively connect with employers and discuss potential internship opportunities.

- **Recommendation:** Centralize promotion of internship and co-op fairs and related campus-wide career development events.
- **Recommendation:** Provide an internship preparation course available to all students.

Conclusion

Managing the campus-wide coordinating of co-ops and internships is an important and difficult task. While there are no “one-size-fits-all” processes and procedures for professional practice courses across the curriculum, there are several recommendations that can be enacted within one year that may have a dramatic impact on efficient tracking, reporting, recruiting, and attainment of co-ops and internships. We hope the recommendations within this report meet the needs of the charge as outlined.

To reiterate, we recommend that key departments and offices collaborate to implement following recommendations as specifically delineated in this report:

1. Obtain campus-wide buy-in for a unified co-op and internship program;
2. Enact an aggregate data gathering and reporting system using a single recruiting and job posting system (see pages 10-11 & 13-15);
3. Create a sustainable technological and human resource infrastructure (see pages 11-13);
4. Assess effectiveness and learning outcomes of the University co-op and internship program (see page 9);
5. Enhance employer relationships leading to increased opportunities for co-ops and internships (see pages 12-14).

Respectfully submitted,
The Co-op and Internship Task Force Committee

Co-op and Internship Task Force Committee Members

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Kacee Snyder, Alumni Career Services
Shannon Spencer, University Advancement
Susan Swinford, Office of the Dean of Students
Kenneth Thompson, College of Musical Arts
Jessica Turos, Career Center

Appendix D: Legal Considerations - Risk Management, Background Checks, and Liability

Risk management is an important component of co-ops and internships that is often overlooked. When students are off campus and not well supervised, this opens the potential for liability issues. There are two types of insurance that the university offers to students. One is professional liability insurance, and it is for students who are going to have client contact on a regular basis. Liability insurance is used primarily by students in social work, medical technology, gerontology, etc. The other type of insurance is general insurance and covers students who are working with people, but not independently. General insurance covers criminal justice, nursing, student teachers, etc. Liability insurance is program specific, and there is not a current University-wide policy.

- **Recommendation:** Identify a University-wide policy regarding liability insurance and apply it to all students who qualify for its use.
 - Universal process for background checks, drug screening. A criminal background check (fingerprinting) by the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification (BCI&I) and a FBI criminal history record check is a requirement for Ohio licensure and for student teaching/internship in most local school districts.
 - Fingerprinting should be done electronically and is available at the Campus Police Department
 - Legal Counsel and Collaborative Agreements: some agencies (hospitals) require contractual agreements
 - Immunizations: Student teachers/interns need to submit evidence to the Office of Research and Field Experiences that they have been tested for tuberculosis
 - Risk Management and Liability Insurance:
 - Universal statement regarding student enrollment and blanket coverage. Provide enough information, so students can make informed decision about need for additional insurance
 - Field placement requires liability insurance. The Social Work Program now utilizes the University insurance policy which provides coverage at "no cost" to the student.

**U.S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division**



(April 2010)

Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act

This fact sheet provides general information to help determine whether interns must be paid the minimum wage and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act for the services that they provide to “for-profit” private sector employers.

Background

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines the term “employ” very broadly as including to “suffer or permit to work.” Covered and non-exempt individuals who are “suffered or permitted” to work must be compensated under the law for the services they perform for an employer. Internships in the “for-profit” private sector will most often be viewed as employment, unless the test described below relating to trainees is met. Interns in the “for-profit” private sector who qualify as employees rather than trainees typically must be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek.*

The Test For Unpaid Interns

There are some circumstances under which individuals who participate in “for-profit” private sector internships or training programs may do so without compensation. The Supreme Court has held that the term “suffer or permit to work” cannot be interpreted so as to make a person whose work serves only his or her own interest an employee of another who provides aid or instruction. This may apply to interns who receive training for their own educational benefit if the training meets certain criteria. The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program.

The following six criteria must be applied when making this determination:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

If all of the factors listed above are met, an employment relationship does not exist under the FLSA, and the Act’s minimum wage and overtime provisions do not apply to the intern. This exclusion from the definition of employment is necessarily quite narrow because the FLSA’s definition of “employ” is very broad. Some of the most commonly discussed factors for “for-profit” private sector internship programs are considered below.

Similar To An Education Environment And The Primary Beneficiary Of The Activity

In general, the more an internship program is structured around a classroom or academic experience as opposed to the employer's actual operations, the more likely the internship will be viewed as an extension of the individual's educational experience (this often occurs where a college or university exercises oversight over the internship program and provides educational credit). The more the internship provides the individual with skills that can be used in multiple employment settings, as opposed to skills particular to one employer's operation, the more likely the intern would be viewed as receiving training. Under these circumstances the intern does not perform the routine work of the business on a regular and recurring basis, and the business is not dependent upon the work of the intern. On the other hand, if the interns are engaged in the operations of the employer or are performing productive work (for example, filing, performing other clerical work, or assisting customers), then the fact that they may be receiving some benefits in the form of a new skill or improved work habits will not exclude them from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements because the employer benefits from the interns' work.

Displacement And Supervision Issues

If an employer uses interns as substitutes for regular workers or to augment its existing workforce during specific time periods, these interns should be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek. If the employer would have hired additional employees or required existing staff to work additional hours had the interns not performed the work, then the interns will be viewed as employees and entitled compensation under the FLSA. Conversely, if the employer is providing job shadowing opportunities that allow an intern to learn certain functions under the close and constant supervision of regular employees, but the intern performs no or minimal work, the activity is more likely to be viewed as a bona fide education experience. On the other hand, if the intern receives the same level of supervision as the employer's regular workforce, this would suggest an employment relationship, rather than training.

Job Entitlement

The internship should be of a fixed duration, established prior to the outset of the internship. Further, unpaid internships generally should not be used by the employer as a trial period for individuals seeking employment at the conclusion of the internship period. If an intern is placed with the employer for a trial period with the expectation that he or she will then be hired on a permanent basis, that individual generally would be considered an employee under the FLSA.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

This publication is for general information and is not to be considered in the same light as official statements of position contained in the regulations.

For additional information, visit our Wage and Hour Division Website: <http://www.wagehour.dol.gov> and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

U.S. Department of Labor
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* The FLSA makes a special exception under certain circumstances for individuals who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency and for individuals who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for private non-profit food banks. WHD also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships in the public sector and for non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible. WHD is reviewing the need for additional guidance on internships in the public and non-profit sectors.

Legal Issues: A Faculty Guide to Ethical and Legal Standards in Student Hiring

Purpose of this guide:

The success of students in obtaining employment is important to a number of parties on the college campus. In addition to the students themselves, these parties include the professionals who work in the career center and in admissions, development, and alumni relations offices, and you, the faculty.

You play a direct role in the employment process for new graduates. Usually, your role and that of the career services practitioner are complementary. Occasionally, however, helping students in their job searches can result in unanticipated illegal or unethical actions.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), to which a great number of academic and hiring institutions belong, provides a set of ethical standards for guiding the job-search process. Entitled [*Principles for Professional Conduct for Career Services & Employment Professionals*](#), these standards are based on notions of fairness, truthfulness, non-injury, confidentiality, and lawfulness. In its foreword, the *Principles* document notes that colleges and employers share the common goal of "achieving the best match between the individual student and the employing organization."

Three basic precepts serve as the foundation of this goal, namely:

Maintaining an open and free selection of employment opportunities in an atmosphere conducive to objective thought, where job candidates can choose optimum long-term uses of their talents that are consistent with personal objectives and all relevant facts;

Maintaining a recruiting process that is fair and equitable to candidates and employing organizations;

Supporting informed and responsible decision making by candidates.

Because of the role you play in the hiring process, and the influence you have with both students seeking jobs and employers seeking new talent, NACE has created this guide to assist you.

Guidelines

- **Candidate Referral**

Employers may contact you to request the names of students who would be excellent candidates for job opportunities. At first glance, it seems harmless to

provide the names of your best students. However, there are some potential legal and ethical pitfalls. If you or a colleague receive a job lead from an employer and choose only to refer a few individuals without publicizing the position to all students who may be qualified, you are not maintaining "a fair and equitable recruiting process."

Also, by identifying individuals for employment on a "regular" basis, you may be considered an "employment agency" for purposes of compliance with equal employment opportunity laws. For example, if it appears as if you are (innocently or otherwise) referring only male students or only minority students, you may be open to charges of discrimination.

Employers who act in accordance with the *Principles* understand and expect students to receive open and equal access to information about job opportunities.

A Suggested Course of Action: If you receive a request for student referrals, you can, of course, notify individual students who have declared an interest in such positions and encourage them to apply. However, also post the position in your department and announce it to your classes. At the same time, contact the university career center so that the position can be listed campus-wide. There are practical reasons for these actions. The career services office may have an existing relationship with the requesting employer through co-op, part-time/summer job, internship, job fair, or other recruiting programs. Or, the career center practitioners may wish to develop a broader relationship with the employer. Sometimes unproductive misunderstandings occur when an employer works with more than one campus office.

- **Referral of Minority Candidates**

Most employers have diversity objectives in their college relations programs. Accordingly, they will make a special effort to identify and attract minority candidates. You will probably be asked for help in accomplishing this task.

The NACE *Principles* document endorses compliance with EEO guidelines and adherence to affirmative action principles by both college and staffing professionals. It is illegal to discriminate against protected groups. It is considered appropriate for career center practitioners to inform members of protected groups about employment opportunities, especially in areas where minorities are underrepresented. Similarly, employers are encouraged to inform minority populations of special activities, e.g., information sessions or career fairs that have been developed to help achieve an employer's affirmative action goals. You can participate in all of these activities.

While it is lawful and ethical for you to assist employers in reaching out to minority groups, it is inappropriate for you to identify only minority individuals who might fit the needs of an organization. You have an obligation to provide a "fair" system, i.e., one where all students have access to information about career opportunities.

A Suggested Course of Action: If you receive a request for minority candidate referrals, you can make announcements in class, post signs in your department,

notify minority students' organizations (e.g., societies of black, female, or Hispanic engineers), pass the request on to the career center, and encourage the employer to contact the career center directly. You can also refer the employer to your college's minority student advisory office (if one exists). That office may be authorized to provide a full list of the members of a requested population.

- **Providing References**

When you are asked by an employer for a student's reference, confidentiality becomes a major concern. Simply, information about a student should not be shared unless the student has furnished you with prior authorization. Once permission has been obtained, you should provide information that is based on facts, not conjecture, and not on personal information unrelated to the student's qualifications for the job in question.

A Suggested Course of Action: When you are asked to provide a written or oral reference for a student, obtain written permission from the student. All reference information should be based on firsthand knowledge and, if possible, written documentation. When providing information, you should avoid personal matters (e.g., marital status, health, disabilities, race, religion, etc.) that by law should not be included in employment decisions, even if you believe that such information might enhance the student's candidacy.

- **Final Comments**

The goal of student employment is most likely reached when all parties involved work cooperatively, ethically, and within the law. There may be instances when you are unsure of how to help your students and stay within the law. On those occasions, call the career services center for more information.

You and your colleagues on the faculty are encouraged to offer comments to your career services center practitioners regarding these guidelines and the issues this guide addresses. Please feel free to note issues that may not be covered.

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