

Internship Coordinator Overview

The University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences (SIS) Internship Coordinator is responsible for the development and coordination of opportunities for student internships, field experiences, and/or practica. The Internship Coordinator works closely with faculty to develop external relationships with employers, external entities in order to provide experiential opportunities to SIS graduate and undergraduate students, and with the students directly in facilitating best fit and preparedness for their experiential learning experiences. The Internship Coordinator will also manage the end-to-end administration of the experiential learning program as a whole.

Progress summary

Internship opportunity development:

Since the launch of the position in December 2014, the Internship Coordinator has begun development of a true internship program, and many SIS students have already enjoyed opportunities to network and interact with companies for potential employment and internships. Most notably, Cheetah Mobile, which is the world's leading mobile application developer, came in to talk to SIS students about what they do and how they can be a part of their exciting future. They shared international internship opportunities as well as full-time jobs that they hope to recruit SIS students to fill. One of SIS' own MSIS alumna, Jill Shih, gave a compelling presentation to current SIS students that got them excited about opportunities that are available to them at Cheetah Mobile.

Additionally, SIS is actively engaging our alumni network in an open dialogue about their organization/industry needs, and help them to create internship opportunities for SIS students when appropriate. The Internship Coordinator is also working with the Director of Student Services, Wes Lipschultz, and the Office of PittServes to help launch a pilot program called iServe@PittServes, which strives to leverage the talents and aspirations of the students within SIS in order to facilitate meaningful volunteer projects with local organizations. Utilizing a skill-based inventory, organizations have the opportunity to submit project proposals and seek student volunteers to work on the projects in the fall 2015 semester.

Some companies that SIS students have connected with include:

- Cheetah Mobile
- Matrix Solutions
- Enwhorl
- BNY Mellon
- UPMC
- MSA
- First Niagara
- Confluence
- Giftcards.com

- Giant Eagle
- Highmark
- Mt. Lebanon Public Library
- Gumberg Library, Duquesne University
- DC Public Library
- Wilkins School Community Center-a local nonprofit
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Internship Coordinator is also currently in the process of recruiting companies to participate and sponsor iFest 2016, which is a week-long event where SIS invites employers, speakers, and students to visit the school and participate in two different career expo events. iFest showcases our talented students in competitions, giving them a chance to present research projects they are working on.

Student preparedness development:

During the spring 2015 semester, the Internship Coordinator organized several professional development sessions for SIS students--one of which featured LANtek, a leading IT staffing and consulting agency. LANtek representatives talked to SIS students about how to interview for an IT job and shared valuable advice about how to tell your story during an interview.

Also, the Internship Coordinator helped organize a session on the power of LinkedIn. This presentation highlighted the benefits of the social networking platform and how it can help job/internship seekers. Students found this session to be incredibly eye opening and commented that they will be using LinkedIn to help them start their careers.

In addition to these professional development sessions, the Internship Coordinator met with over 100 students who are interested in obtaining internships, conducted resume and cover letter reviews with students as needed, conducted mock interviews with several students to prepare them for scheduled interviews, and helped students to research internship opportunities.

Internship process development:

In order to develop and implement a new internship process, the Internship Coordinator has:

- gathered, organized, and combined prior internship data in order to implement consistent standards and best practices
- created a database for each of SIS' programs that include all the employers SIS has partnered with in the past and how frequently they've done so in order to analyze patterns and trends among our industry partners
- sent out thank you letters to employers who have hosted SIS students to ensure some consistency when it comes to communicating with our industry partners
- streamlined the internship application and paperwork processes as much as possible for students in order to establish clear requirements

- worked closely with the Office of International Services to learn the ins and outs of immigration rules in order to better educate and prepare SIS' international students for internship opportunities

Assessment:

The Internship Coordinator sent out a student internship feedback survey to all students who have obtained an internship/practicum/field placement since last winter seeking their comments and questions about the newly launched internship program. Responses were analyzed for patterns to identify areas of strength and weakness. For example, some students would like to see more opportunities that are located outside of the Pittsburgh region, a job board or portal where internship opportunities would be listed was suggested, and some would like to see more career fair type events held at SIS. Overall, the responses have been helpful in identifying where the Internship Coordinator should focus their efforts in helping students find internships.

Future Endeavors

For the fall semester, several exciting events are planned:

- On September 18th, Federated Investors is visiting SIS to give a presentation to students about internship and full-time positions they are looking to fill.
- Working with the IT department of K&L Gates to develop an internship program and supply them with SIS students to meet their needs.
- On September 25th, GE Oil & Gas is hosting an informational webinar for students for their Information Technology Leadership Program.
- On September 24th, six MLIS alumni will participate in a panel discussion on the more non-traditional paths they've taken since earning their degree. It is important to broaden the horizons for our current students so that they can see the many fields in which an LIS graduate can thrive. We have alumni from industry, the nonprofit sector, and several others coming to speak to our incoming LIS students.
- On October 6th, SIS will host the Information Executive Roundtable where information executives meet over lunch with a select group of top-performing students to discuss employment opportunities, strategies for career preparation, practical work experience, and the "soft" skills necessary for success as a leader in the information field. This event is an excellent opportunity for employers and students to network in an informal, small-group setting.
- On November 2nd, the Internship Coordinator and SIS' Alumni Constituent will be hosting a fall edition of Professional Development Day, which will feature mock interviews with SIS alumni and a how-to session on elevator pitches.
- On November 6th, an IT consultant from the Federal Reserve Board will attend the SIS social hour and interact with students about the work the Federal Reserve does and how our students can get involved.