



Entrepreneurial Internship Program Connects Businesses To UNH Students

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DURHAM, N.H. - In today's highly competitive job market, University of New Hampshire students aiming for high-tech careers gain valuable work experience from an entrepreneurial internship program that has successfully matched students with businesses for a decade.

In its 10th year, the Entrepreneurial Internship course places seniors at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics with entrepreneurial ventures in various stages of business development and firms that service the entrepreneurial sector. These mentoring relationships allow companies to utilize the student resources available to them while the students gain valuable work experience.

"Students gain valuable exposure and experience from working with exciting companies and the close contact with business professionals at these organizations. A number of our graduates have been offered jobs with the company that they interned with, and in today's job market, this provides a great opportunity for companies as well as students," said Jeffrey Sohl, director of the UNH Center for Venture Research, who teaches the class.

UNH graduate Cara Hayward interned at PAX World Mutual Funds in Portsmouth as an equity researcher and said she gained invaluable experience in the field of finance, an area in which she had extensive interest but little work experience.

"My internship at PAX World put me a step ahead of all the other first years entering my field. I learned the fundamentals of the business and was already able to apply the lessons we learned in training. As an equity research intern, I learned how to value a company by researching and proposing stock ideas. This was helpful for the firm as well as my career development," Hayward said.

Recent graduate Michelle Pirro also interned at PAX World Mutual Funds. "I recommend all undergraduate students participate in an internship program. It is a good way to find out what you are interested in (or not) before graduation. Having an internship let me apply what I learned in the classroom to a professional setting," Pirro said.

Businesses also benefit from the internship by working with knowledgeable and energetic business students focused on specific objectives outlined by the businesses, and by gaining greater exposure to the business school and upcoming graduates.

Companies that have participated in the past include PC Connection, Portsmouth Tea Company, Direct Capital, Blue Mermaid Island Grill, The Kane Company, VKernel, AMI Graphics, and PelletSales.com.

"The benefit of the Entrepreneurial Internship course to small businesses is enormous. The students provided that assist our clients are of high caliber. The businesses get a product that is professionally done and fills the needs of the business. The areas of assistance provided

include marketing, financial analysis, access to capital, feasibility studies and expansion plans," said Warren Daniel, regional director of the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center. The NHBDC is a partner with the Whittemore School for the Entrepreneurial Internship program.

eCoast Sales Solutions has participated in the Entrepreneurial Internship program since 2001, and has found it a valuable resource that efficiently matches the interests of students to the needs of the company.

"We have been very impressed with the talent pool that UNH has offered. The students are always motivated and knowledgeable, which makes it easy to integrate them into our projects. UNH interns have become valuable members of project teams adhering to strict goals and deadlines. The interns have provided excellent work and have become an asset to our business. We look forward to continued participation in the internship program," said Kim Gibney, director of human resources with eCoast Sales Solutions.

Students work 8 to 10 hours a week for 13 weeks, as well as attend weekly in-class meetings where they learn about topics such as venture capital, private angel investors, due diligence, and the new economy in New Hampshire. In addition to the internship and class time, the students team up to work with nonprofit organizations.

The cost for companies to participate in the internship program ranges from \$500 to \$750 per student interning at the company. Companies within a one-hour commute from UNH's Durham campus are preferred. Companies interested in participating or learning more about the fall 2009 internship program should contact Laura Hill at 603-862-3341 or laura.hill@unh.edu.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, space-grant and community-engaged university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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