

American University  
**PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE MASTERS INTERNSHIPS**  
Fall 2005

**Faculty Advisor:**

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You've made a very wise decision by choosing to do an internship while you are a student at American University. Many of the offices with which you could work are very difficult to get into as a new graduate without experience. By working as an intern, you will add work experience, and perhaps a relevant publication, to your resume. Your internship will complement your coursework and help launch you into your aspired career.

This experience can be as rewarding as you make it. You should aim to use your internship to extend your classroom knowledge by applying what you've learned in school to an actual work setting. For you, the coming months can also be a time of self-reflection. You have the advantage of exploring a viable work option and validating or repudiating your ideas about a particular career path or work environment.

An internship stems from the collective effort of you, the university, and your employer. Unlike the cozy environs of the classroom, however, when you check into your work site don't expect an atmosphere that focuses attention on you. Even while you are on the job, you may not be at the top of your supervisor's agenda. In the worst-case scenario, you might be viewed as a nuisance by an employer who doesn't have the time to give you the guidance you may need.

One of your first challenges, then, is to determine who at your work site knows what you need to know and has the patience and personality to be your mentor. Anticipate various situations and problems you might encounter and compile a list of pertinent questions. Don't be afraid to ask them. **Remember, the person most responsible for maximizing your experience is you.** Take the lead in this learning process by asking, observing, analyzing, and doing things you may have never done before. It will help you to have a more productive and enjoyable experience.

**Who's Who for you at AU:**

**Marie Spaulding (x1799)** is your contact at the Career Center. The center has a number of programs designed to help you. You are encouraged to take full advantage of them. Ms. Spaulding has steered many students through the internship process, and is probably familiar with any situation you might encounter. She will be the main interface between you and your internship sponsor. Should a discrepancy occur between your job description and your actual duties, should an intolerable personality conflict arise, or should communications break down, etc., it is important that you bring it to Ms. Spaulding's attention at once. Addressing issues early may prevent major problems from developing and can salvage otherwise disastrous situations.

**Chris Tudge (x2033)**. Students enrolling in internships for academic credit (BIO-691, ENVS-691 or CSC-691) need to see me for permission to register for the course. In addition, you will need the permission of the department Chair, **Cathy Schaeff (x2175)** for biotechnology and environmental science & assessment or **Teresa Larkin (x2766)** for applied computing, to register for the academic credit.

### **Career Center:**

During the fall, make an appointment at the Career Center (x 1804) for a resume critique and create a profile in AU CareerWeb. To create a profile, go to the Career Center web site: <http://www.american.edu/careercenter>. Once you have entered your personal and academic information to create a profile, you will begin to receive targeted emails from the Career Center alerting you to events and Hot Jobs and Internships that may be of interest to you. You will also need to upload your resume after you have reviewed it with an advisor in the Career Center.

Field Code Changed

You are also encouraged to attend Career Center events (e.g., Job and Internship Fair for which you must pre-register, Resume Critique, etc.) designed to orient you to work education. You may choose the events you want to attend at: <http://www.american.edu/careercenter/events.html>.

Field Code Changed

### **Faculty:**

The following faculty have volunteered to be contacts for internship information in the three PSM streams: Biotechnology – **Dr. Carlini (x2184)** & **Dr. Arneson (x2186)**; Environmental science and assessment – **Dr. Kim (x2181)** & **Dr. MacAvoy (x3003)**; Applied computing – **Dr. Larkin (x2766)** & **??**. They often know of specific opportunities that are new and are not posted on AU CareerWeb. Set up a time to meet with one of them.

**Course Objectives:** To enhance your experience in a working environment through:

- increased understanding of the organization and of the factors influencing organizational behavior;
- completion of a work product that contributes significantly to the internship organization or to the field in which you would like to work and to your own resume;
- developing the personal, interpersonal, and technical skills you need to succeed in the career you choose.

### **Requirements:**

- 1) You may enroll for 1 – 6 credit hours. One credit hour requires that you work for 8 hours/week for 12 weeks; two credits hours require 10 hours/week for 12 weeks; 3 credit hours require 15 hours/week for 12 weeks and 6 credit hours require 20 – 24 hours/week for 12 weeks.
- 2) You need to meet with me before you begin the internship to enroll for internship credit and to discuss what you plan to accomplish in the time you have at the site. We will also review the assignments described below. Please email or telephone me to set up a time.
- 3) Two written assignments. As this course has no exams, submitting your papers/projects on time becomes even more important. Each week an assignment is late will cost you one letter grade.

**We are requiring you to keep photocopies of all papers submitted to me. Should the need arise be ready to submit a second copy of your paper.**

This is where you'll begin to develop your definition of professionalism. This word means different things at different work sites. To make the most of your internship, at a minimum your concept of professionalism should include punctuality, performance and resourcefulness. In order to perform effectively make sure you understand your assignments before tackling them. If you need clarification, do not hesitate to ask your supervisor. Make every effort to complete tasks ahead of schedule. This way you will be giving your supervisor an opportunity to check your work and allowing yourself enough time for last minute revisions. This pacing will be greatly appreciated by your workmates. Once you start a task, and realize you have a question, try a few simple ideas for finding the answer on your own before you return to your supervisor. This will highlight your independence and focus and it will minimize the labor involved for the staff at your site office. Other important characteristics include a good sense of humor, a willingness to be flexible, to be cooperative and to go above and beyond the basics of an assignment, and to be as self-reliant as possible.

**Grades:**

Employer Evaluation	50%
Your supervisor will be asked to evaluate your performance on the job. Also, I might be conferring with this person from time to time.	
Assignment #1: Objectives paper/timeline	10%
Assignment #2: Final research paper/poster/project	40%

**ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS AND DUE DATES**

**1: LEARNING OBJECTIVES/ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS (3-5 PAGES)**

**Due - Monday of your second week on site. Must be in my box in Hurst Hall 101 by 5 pm.**

At the top put your name, home, work, and cell numbers, and best times to reach you at each. Also list the name, title, email address and telephone number of your immediate supervisor(s).

This assignment may be informal, yet must be well thought out and realistic. Begin the paper by discussing why you chose to undertake this internship and what you hope to gain from your experience. Include a brief timeline describing each of your goals and when you expect to accomplish them. The next section should be descriptive and will require you to become thoroughly familiar with your internship employer. Make sure your paper includes:

- 1) brief history of the organization -- why, when, how it began;
- 2) the organization's goals and major policy or science efforts;
- 3) the internal structure of the organization – by diagram and description;
- 4) descriptions of the clientele or constituents and explanations of their relationships with the organization;
- 5) the organization's relationship with relevant agencies, congressional committees, and other pertinent governmental entities;
- 6) discussion of your relationship with the office, i.e. duties, responsibilities, opportunities.

## **2A. SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH PAPER (8-10 pages)**

**Paper due in my box in room 101 Hurst by 5pm on the Friday of your last week on site.**

This paper will be the result of your productivity from the moment you get on the job. It should reflect the timeline you handed in as your first assignment. I recommend that you discuss it with your supervisor within your first full week on the job.

This paper will relate directly to some aspect of your work. It may include research done on the job, but must include outside research as well– sit down with your supervisor and analyze a major need of the organization. You will function as a consultant. Your paper will describe a resolution for the need that you will identify through your conversations with your supervisor. The topic selected must be narrow enough to be covered with a small research effort. All assignments must be approved by me and this can be done in person or over the phone.

Examples of suitable projects are developing a public education campaign, preparing a plan for coordinating a campaign or program, writing an article for an internal newsletter, or conducting experiments for a research laboratory.

**\*OR\***

## **2B. PUBLISHABLE PAPER/POSTER**

**Paper due on the same schedule as 2A.**

To maximize your internship experience, to benefit your internship organization, and to provide you with a special work product for your resume, consider writing a paper, poster or article that you will publish/present in some venue. Examples of projects you might undertake include writing a grant proposal, drafting an issue statement or policy position, writing an article for a newspaper or journal, designing a poster for presentation at an appropriate venue, or writing a scientific paper. Be realistic. Whereas this is certainly the paper option which will most help you to get the most benefit for the time you spend on the internship, you need to ensure that your work site is conducive to producing such a product and that you can accomplish the goal you've set for yourself.

To complete any of these assignments successfully requires a thorough understanding of the organization, its publics, policies, and problems. You should work closely with your internship organization's staff in completing the assignments. This is an excellent opportunity to improve your writing and research methods. By sharpening your problem-solving skills and applying your creativity you will be taking full advantage of your work experience while producing something of merit that will benefit your employer.

## **EMPLOYER-EVALUATION**

**Your supervisor will be contacted for an evaluation of your performance. Aspects that I will encourage her/him to consider are:**

- 1) Was the student responsible (i.e., punctual, focused and resourceful)?
- 2) Was it your impression that this student takes seriously his professional responsibilities?
- 3) Did the student contribute to the organization in a meaningful way?
- 4) Did the student craft and execute a project that was challenging yet realistic?
- 5) On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate the value of the student's final product?

**A FEW LAST THOUGHTS...**

If at any time you feel that the kind of work you are doing, the hours you are working, or any other aspect of the internship is developing differently than expected please contact me, as your faculty supervisor, or Marie Spaulding your internship advisor at the Career Center (202-885-1799; [mspauld@american.edu](mailto:mspauld@american.edu)) as soon as possible and explain the problem. Likewise, talk with the industry employer immediately if you have questions concerning the safety of the work environment.

Finally, keep in mind that when you are in the workplace, your employer expects you to behave like an employee rather than a student—arrive on time, act and dress professionally, and show interest and initiative. Make a good impression on your organization and it will pay off in your future.

**Most of all – enjoy the experience and learn all you can!!!**