



**A Comparison of Credit and Non-Credit Internships  
in Their Expectations and the  
Utilization of Campus Resources**

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# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- Students are motivated to participate in professional practice, such as internships, to develop skills, gain necessary experience, and connect with employers for full-time employment.
- Students majoring in Arts & Humanities are less motivated to participate in an internship than other students, especially with regard to connecting with potential employers for full-time employment, gaining professional experience, and obtaining a realistic preview of the workplace.

### **For those who are seeking an internship or co-op:**

- 75% expect to request credit for their internship if offered by their institutions.
- 54% expect to rely heavily on their faculty as a resource to obtain an internship.
- 47% expect to receive a performance evaluation from their employer; another 40% are considering asking for an evaluation.
- 66% expect to hold conversations with faculty, their internship/co-op advisor, or other campus representative during their work experiences.

### **For those who have recently completed an internship or co-op:**

- 47% actually requested credit.
- Students worked an average of 15 to 20 hours per week, but there was no relationship between amount of time worked and credit received.
- More co-op completers than internship completers (1) were contacted by campus representatives during their placement, (2) documented their experience, and

(3) received a performance evaluation from their employer.

- Upon returning to campus, co-op completers were more likely than internship completers to engage with faculty and advisors.
- Internship completers were more likely than co-op completers to discuss their experience with their parents.
- More than 50% of internship completers did not utilize campus resources to any great extent upon returning to campus.
- Students from large public universities were less likely than students from mid and small publics and private institutions to utilize campus resources when they returned from their work experiences.

In the early stages of internship exploration, Career Services offices are most often utilized to identify potential opportunities. Involvement of Career Services appears to be minimal among those returning from their internships. Parents play a critical role both in assisting in the search for an internship and in helping their sons or daughters understand the development gained from their experiences.

## INTRODUCTION

Credit-based internships are one of hottest trends on college campuses. The number of students earning credit through internships appears to be increasing. This rise may result from several factors: (1) the fallout over the unpaid internship situation; (2) the growth of internships as a degree completion requirement; and (3) the belief that organizations can reduce their compensation liability for student workers.

When a student purchases credit for an on-campus class, the student expects to have a faculty member guide the learning process, provide feedback, and be available outside of class for assistance. In traditional cooperative education programs, co-op students can expect pre-assignment orientation, a visit from faculty or other campus representative at the work

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

site (or some form of regular communication), feedback on performance, and a concluding reflection on the experience with commentary from the faculty advisor. In the world of internships, these factors may be present but often are not.

An extensive survey of college students who were either seeking an internship or co-op, or had recently completed one, offered a glimpse of what interns “get with that credit” in terms of campus resources. The purpose of the study was to:

- Investigate the expectations of potential interns and co-ops regarding the campus resources available to them prior to, during, and after their assignment.
- Report the actual resources used by interns and co-ops who had recently completed an assignment.
- Compare expectations on resource utilization with actual utilization.
- Compare resource utilization by interns and co-ops who received credit with resource utilization by those who did not receive credit.
- Compare resource utilization by unpaid intern and co-op completers with resource utilization by those with paid assignments.

## METHOD

Approximately 27,500 undergraduates from 234 colleges and universities throughout the United States completed InternBridge’s online survey between September and December 2009. Their support was solicited through their institution’s career services or internship offices. The survey contained questions on the following:

- Resources used in obtaining an internship
- Learning expectations
- Resource utilization upon return to campus

- Characteristics of the internship or co-op (e.g., paid or unpaid, credit or non-credit).

## PART I: INTERNSHIP AND CO-OP SEEKERS

Nearly 14,400 respondents indicated that they were searching for their first internship or co-op. These respondents were primarily white (62%), female (70%), and underclass students (nearly 50% were first- or second-year students, while 28% were third-year students). The average age was between 21 and 22. Nearly 75% were receiving some form of financial aid, with 73% reporting family incomes of less than \$80,000. Fifty-four percent (54%) reported a grade point average (GPA) of 3.35 or better. They were evenly distributed across private (34%), small to medium public (30%), and large public (31%) institutions. Seekers were pursuing a variety of majors, with Business (23%) and Social Science (22%) comprising the largest segments, followed by Engineering (13%), Physical and Biological Sciences (11%), and Arts & Humanities (10%). Other majors, including Agriculture & Natural Resources, Communications, Education, and Health Sciences, comprised 5% to 8% each.

Nearly a quarter (24%) of the seekers reported that their academic program or institution did not offer credit for internships or co-op experiences. The rest indicated that credit was available; most (51%) said credit was an optional requirement, while 25% were required to enroll for internship or co-op credits. When asked whether they would enroll for credit for their internship or co-op, three quarters (75%) of students from institutions offering credit indicated that they would request credit for their internship or co-op experience.

## Why Pursue an Internship or Co-op?

Many reasons for pursuing an internship or co-op may be offered: to earn income to pay for tuition and other college expenses, gain a preview of the workplace, develop important skills and competencies, fulfill college graduation requirements, and complete community service obligations. Respondents were presented with a list of 14 motivators and asked to rate each in importance for engaging in professional

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

practice. The scale was anchored from 1 = *little or no importance* to 5 = *extremely high importance*.

Based on the overall ratings, the following six reasons were rated between *high* and *extremely high importance* (mean):

- Gain hands-on work experience (4.56)
- Prepare to be employed in specific field (4.46)
- Learn new skills & competencies (4.43)
- Make professional contacts for future networking (4.34)
- Gain a realistic preview of the workplace (4.18)
- Experience work at a potential full-time employer (4.11)

Rating comparisons were made by gender, family income, GPA, type of institution, and academic major. The following table provides the mean for each reason and the statistical information on the comparisons.

**Table 1.**  
Reasons that Seekers Give for Engaging in an Internship or Co-op

Reason	Mean Importance Rating	Significant Comparisons (.01 or less)
Gain Hands-on Experience	4.56	Gender (F=84.06) Family Income (F=5.69) Academic Major (F=6.41)
Prepare for employment	4.46	Gender (F=77.87) Family Income (F=9.92) Institutional Type (F=7.02) Academic Major (F=10.69)
Learn New Skills & competencies	4.43	Gender (F=24.07) Family Income (F=25.48) Institutional Type (F=12.36) Academic Major (F=4.91)
Make Professional Contacts	4.34	Gender (F=27.59) GPA (F=2.90) Academic Major (F=5.31)

Reason	Mean Importance Rating	Significant Comparisons (.01 or less)
Gain Realistic Preview of Workplace	4.18	Gender (F=44.92) GPA (F=9.45) Academic Major (F=2.77)
Experience Work at Potential Full-time Employer	4.11	GPA (F=9.27) Family Income (F=21.65) Institutional Type (F=10.85) Academic Major (F=20.67)
Receive a full-time job offer	4.00	GPA (F=31.81) Family Income (F=80.24) Institutional Type (F=51.41) Academic Major (F=36.22)
Earn money	3.76	Gender (F=7.78) GPA (F=36.35) Family Income (F=52.77) Institutional Type (F=26.40) Academic Major (F=19.38)
Explore an organization	3.72	Gender (F=24.07) Family Income (F=25.48) Institutional Type (F=12.36) Academic Major (F=4.91)
Explore a New Industry	3.61	Gender (F=9.77) GPA (F=16.57) Family Income (F=24.40) Institutional Type (F=26.22) Academic Major (F=16.76)
Fulfill Degree Requirements	3.50	Gender (F=43.59) GPA (F=139.27) Family Income (F=116.34) Institutional Type (F=29.72) Academic Major (F=44.42)
Receive Credit	3.38	Gender (F=46.69) GPA (F=38.00) Family Income (F=133.51) Institutional Type (F=54.84) Academic Major (F=48.62)

Table 1 Continued on Page 4

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Reason	Mean Importance Rating	Significant Comparisons (.01 or less)
Participate in Community Service	3.35	Gender (F=196.06) GPA (F=15.82) Institutional Type (16.26)
Live in a Specific Area	2.94	GPA (F=14.97) Family Income (F=15.36) Institutional Type (F=7.27) Academic Major (F=10.21)

What does this information tell us? **Women placed greater importance** on eight of the reasons, with the largest differences occurring for *participating in community service*, *receiving college credit*, *fulfilling degree requirements*, *gaining hands-on experience*, and *obtaining a realistic preview of the workplace*. Some of these differences can be explained by choice of academic major (see Table 2 below). Men rated two reasons higher than women: *earning money* and *exploring a new industry*. The remaining four reasons, *exploring an organization*, *receiving a full-time job*, *experience work with a potential full-time employer*, and *living in a specific area*, were not significantly different in the ratings between men and women.

In general, students with **higher GPAs rated all reasons for internship/co-op participation lower** than did those with lower grades. The largest disparity in means was found for *earning money*, where low GPA students (below a 2.7) rated this reason much higher than did those with GPAs above 3.35. Students with GPAs above 3.7 rated three reasons significantly lower than did everyone else: *obtaining a realistic preview of workplace*, *exploring a new organization*, and *experiencing work with a potential full-time employer*. They joined those with GPAs between 3.35 and 3.7 in rating six of the reasons significantly lower than did students with lower grades: *exploring a new industry*, *seeking a full-time offer*, *receiving college credit*, *participating in community service*, *living in a specific area*, and *fulfilling degree requirements*. Another way to look at the differences is that students with grades below 3.35 place a much higher importance on nearly all reasons to engage in an internship or co-op. This tendency may reflect

the fewer options presented to these students upon graduation compared with the number of options presented to higher-achieving students. Employers who stress high GPAs among their selection criteria may want to be aware that high GPA students appear to be less interested in connecting for full-time employment and exploring opportunities at their host organizations, and more interested in making professional contacts.

**Family income has a profound impact on motivating a student to pursue an internship or co-op.** Low income students (family income less than \$40,000) place a much higher importance on every motivator than do students from families with higher incomes. For students with family incomes less than \$80,000, the internship experience is heavily entwined with *successfully completing their degrees*, *earning income*, and *gaining the skills and experiences necessary to obtain full-time employment*. For five of the listed motivators, there is a strong correlation between income and ratings; as family income decreases, the ratings on *earning income*, *obtaining a full-time job*, *receiving college credit*, *participating in community service*, and *fulfilling degree requirements* increase.

Institutional setting plays an important role in the ratings. Students from **private colleges rated multiple motivators to be of less importance than did students from public schools**. In particular, they rated *earning income* and *obtaining full-time employment* noticeably lower than did students from other schools. Students from small and medium public institutions rated *earning college credit* and *fulfilling degree requirements* higher than did all other students. Students from large public institutions registered significantly higher ratings on *exploring new industry*, *participating in community service*, and *living in a specific area*.

By comparing ratings by academic majors, differences between men and women and different types of institutions may be better understood. Students were sorted into nine academic clusters depending on the major they reported: Agriculture & Natural Resources, Arts & Humanities, Business, Communication Arts & Sciences, Education, Engineering and Computer Sciences, Physical and Biological



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Sciences, Social Sciences, and Health Sciences. The following table illustrates the significant disparity in the ways different academic majors rate motivators. The following table illustrates the academic majors that rated each reason significantly lower or significantly higher than did students with other majors. For example, two academic major groups, Social Sciences and Health Sciences, rated *gaining hands-on experience* significantly higher than did the other seven academic majors. No group rated this reason significantly lower than did any other group. The groups within the parentheses clustered at the high and low ends, according to ANOVA results, but also shared a similar rating with at least one member in the adjoining cluster.

Some of the ratings will appear obvious. That **Business and Engineering students placed high importance on earning money and connecting for full-time employment** should not surprise anyone. Also not surprisingly, Health Sciences and Education students whose academic programs involve clinical and classroom involvement reported higher importance on *earning college credit, fulfilling degree requirements, and living in specific areas* (close to clinical and teaching sites). **Low ratings by Arts & Humanities students on gaining realistic previews of the workplace, experiencing work with a potential full-time employer, and interning in order to obtain a full-time position underscores the problem with assisting these students as they prepare to transition:** Little attention is placed on developing insights and expectations for the workplace during college. The surprise, based on years of experience in the classroom with these students, is the low level of importance that Agriculture and Natural Resources majors placed on nine motivators. The results may well be a result of the small sample (only 350 responses) which may not reflect other Agriculture and Natural Resources majors who tend to be more focused on work, as many of have prior work experience.

**Table 2.**

**Comparison of Reasons for Seeking an Internship or Co-op by Academic Major (Lowest and Highest)**

Reason	Academic Majors with Lowest Ratings in Importance	Academic Majors with Highest Ratings in Importance
Gain Hands-on Experience		Social Sciences, Health Sciences
Prepare for Employment	Agriculture & Natural Resources, Arts & Humanities	Social Sciences, Health Sciences
Learn New Skills and Competencies	Agriculture & Natural Resources	Engineering and Computer Sciences, Health Sciences
Make Professional Contacts	Agriculture & Natural Resources	Communication Arts & Sciences
Gain Realistic Preview of Workplace	Agriculture & Natural Resources (Arts & Humanities)	
Experience Work at Potential Full-time Employer	Arts & Humanities, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Physical and Biological Sciences, Social Sciences	Business (Communication Arts & Sciences, Engineering and Computer Sciences, Health Sciences, Education)
Receive a Full-time Job Offer	Physical and Biological Sciences, Arts & Humanities, Agriculture & Natural Resources	Business (Communication, Engineering and Computer Sciences, Health Sciences, Education)

Table 2 Continued on Page 6

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Reason	Academic Majors with Lowest Ratings in Importance	Academic Majors with Highest Ratings in Importance
Participate in Community Service	Engineering and Computer Sciences	Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Education
Live in a Specific Area	Physical and Biological Sciences, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Engineering	Education, Health Sciences

## Resources Used to Find an Internship or Co-op.

We were interested in what resources students were tapping into during their search for their internships or co-ops. They were presented with a list of twelve categories of resources that ranged from formal connections (faculty, advisors, family, and friends) to informal connections (online resources, on-campus career events, and social media). More than half (54%) of the students indicated that they were using a faculty member as a resource (see Table 3). The resources are listed by their frequency of use as reported by the students. The usage patterns are also shown by institutional type. Using Chi-square tests, students from private colleges were more likely than students from public colleges to use faculty, their career advisor, and family to find an internship or co-op. **Students from large public schools were more likely to use online and social media resource and career center announcements, but less likely to seek assistance from faculty, classmates, and their families.**



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Table 3.

Resources Utilized to Find an Internship or Co-op, Overall and by Institutional Type

Resource	Percent Utilizing Total	Percent Utilizing Among Private Colleges	Percent Utilizing Among Small-Medium Public Colleges	Percent Utilizing Among Large Public Colleges
Faculty	54	59	55	48
Online Resources and Social Media	46	45	46	49
Faculty	54	59	55	48
Career Center	42	47	39	40
Friends/Acquaintances	41	41	41	41
Internship Advisor	39	39	38	38
Parents/Family	37	43	36	32
Career Fair	35	36	35	37
Career Center Employment/ Internship Database	33	31	31	36
Students in Academic Program/Classmates	30	31	31	28
Department Bulletin Boards	22	21	22	23
Employer Presentations on Campus	17	16	16	18
Parents/Family	37	43	36	32
Twitter, email	8	7	7	10

A total resources use score, ranging from 1 to 12, was tabulated for each student in order to reduce the unwieldiness of working with so many items. The average total resource score was 4, with the distribution shown in Figure 1 below. The resources were also analyzed using factor analysis (varimax rotation), producing **three groups** of resources: (1) campus faculty and advisors, (2) family and friends, and (3) events, online resources (such as online, career fairs, career center job board, and social media). The averages for each cluster of resources suggest that students use approximately one resource from both campus contacts and family contacts, and two from events, social media, and online resources, as follows:

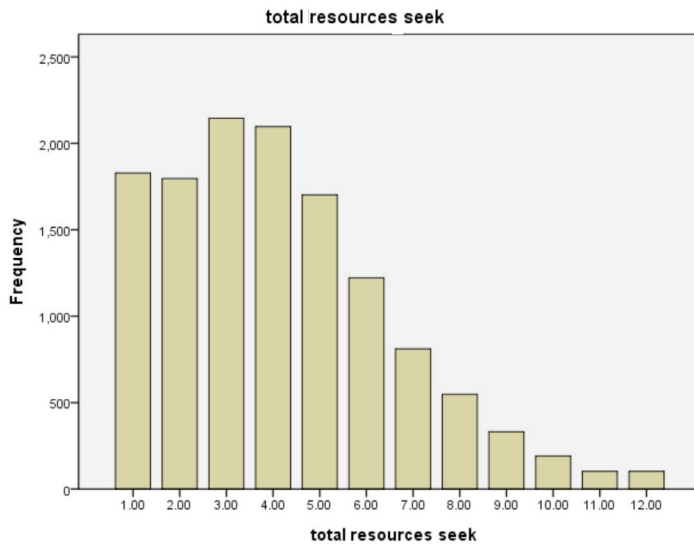
- **1.35** average resources used from **campus contacts**
- **1.10** average resources used from **family contacts**
- **1.69** average resources used from **events/online resources**



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

**Figure 1.**

Number of Resources Used in Finding an Internship or Co-op



Comparisons were made on these four scores (total and three groups) for gender, GPA, academic major, institutional type, and family income. Tables 4 and 5 below summarize the significant comparisons that were found in the use of these different resources.

Numbers highlighted in red indicate groups that were statistically higher than the other groups. Numbers highlighted in green indicate groups that were statistically lower than the other groups.

Because of the large sample size, small mean differences can reflect significant results. When interpreting these tables, it is most useful to look at the practical differences and the patterns that emerged.

**Table 4.**

Mean Differences in the Number of Resources Used in Finding an Internship or Co-op by Gender, GPA, Institutional Type, Academic Major, and Family Income

Characteristics	Mean Total Resources Used	Significance
Male	4.47	F= 105.11 (.000)
Female	4.00	
>3.7	4.04	F=3.28 (.020)
3.35-3.7	4.20	
2.70-3.35	4.19	
<2.7	4.13	
Private	4.30	F=11.35 (.000)
Small Publics	4.10	
Large Publics	4.08	
Agriculture & Natural Resources	4.65	F=29.66 (.000)
Arts & Humanities	4.29	
Business	4.25	
Communications	4.29	
Education	3.87	
Engineering	4.90	
Sciences	4.06	
Social Sciences	3.78	
Health Sciences	3.90	
<\$40K	4.01	F=13.00 (.000)
\$40-80K	4.16	
\$80-120K	4.33	
>\$120K	4.36	

Some of the more interesting results found that men, students from private colleges, students majoring in Agriculture/ Natural Resources and Engineering, and students from families with income greater than \$80,000 tended to use more resources in their search for an internship or co-op. Students with GPAs above 3.7, and those majoring in Education, Social Sciences, and Health Sciences, tend to use fewer resources in their searches.

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Some of the more interesting patterns identified are as follows:

- **Men tend to use more resources**, particularly family contacts and events, than do women.
- **Students with low GPAs use faculty, advisors, and event activities less frequently** than do those with higher grades. Students with GPAs above 3.7 tend not to use family and friends in their searches.
- **Engineering and Business majors make heavy use of events and online resources**, as do Agriculture and Natural Resource majors. **Communications majors tend to use their faculty and advisors** more often than other majors do, while Business and Social Science majors are least likely to call upon family and friends for assistance.
- Students with **family incomes over \$80,000, especially those over \$120,000, rely primarily on family and friends.**

Table 5.

Mean Comparison of Three Categories of Resources By Gender, GPA, Institutional Type, Academic Major, and Family Income

Characteristics	Mean Campus	Significance	Mean Family/Friends	Significance	Mean Events	Significance
Male	1.41	F=20.04	1.21	F=67.80	1.84	F=64.09
Female	1.32	(.000)	1.05	(.000)	1.62	(.000)
>3.7	1.37	F=3.72 (.011)	1.05	F=4.10 (.006)	1.74	F=4.56 (.003)
3.35-3.7	1.38		1.10		1.73	
2.70-3.35	1.33		1.12		1.70	
<2.7	1.27		1.13		1.62	
Institutional Type:		F=42.24 (.000)		F=25.40 (.000)		F=11.73 (.000)
Private	1.46		1.19		1.65	
Small Publics	1.33		1.11		1.66	
Large Publics	1.26		1.02		1.79	
Agriculture & Natural Resources	1.45	F=2.88 (.003)	1.28	F=11.77 (.000)	1.92	F=48.00 (.000)
Arts & Humanities	1.40		1.19		1.63	
Business	1.32		1.07		1.86	
Communications	1.47		1.14		1.73	
Education	1.31		1.15		1.40	
Engineering	1.38		1.18		2.15	
Sciences	1.30		1.15		1.60	
Social Sciences	1.33		0.96		1.46	
Health Sciences	1.36		1.17		1.38	
Family Income:		F=65.97 (.000)		F=65.97 (.000)		
<\$40K	1.33		0.96		1.71	
\$40-80K	1.36		1.14		1.66	
\$80-120K	1.36		1.25		1.71	
>\$120K	1.37		1.32		1.68	

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

## Learning Outcomes and Credit Requirements

Internships and co-ops, especially those in which credit is earned, often come with expectations by faculty and host managers that students will document their experience and be evaluated upon its conclusion. Seekers were asked whether they expected to (1) be required to maintain a journal during their experience (a common practice in a few institutions); (2) connect regularly with faculty or an on-campus advisor (through Blackboard, blog, chat room, Skype, other forms of social media, or a site visit by faculty); (3) be required to document the learning and skills they developed through the experience; and (4) obtain an evaluation from their internship and co-op supervisors upon completion of the work experience.

## Expectations and Documenting Internships Experiences

- **Contact with faculty or advisor**
  - 33% expected no contact with their faculty or advisors
  - 40% expected to receive an occasional email message
  - 25% expected regular contact with on-campus faculty or advisors
  - 10% expected to be visited by a campus representative
- **Document their experience with a paper or presentation**
  - 33% expected not to be required to document their experience
  - 25% expected that documentation would be optional
  - 42% expected to be required to document their experience (25% expected to be graded)
- **Receive a performance evaluation upon completion of experience**
  - 13% did not expect to obtain an evaluation
  - 40% indicated the evaluation was optional
  - 47% expected a required evaluation)

Among their counterparts from private institutions and small-medium public colleges, students from large public colleges are less likely to be required to maintain a journal of their experiences. They are also less likely to have contact with faculty and advisors, although they do receive on-site visits at same rate as students from other schools. In addition, they are less likely to be required to document their experience with a paper or presentation. Students from all schools are equally likely to receive grades on their documentation. Students from large public colleges are most likely to have their experiences evaluated by their supervisors.



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Table 6.

Expected Requirements for Successfully Completing an Internship or Co-op, Overall and by Institutional Type

Expectations	All Seekers (%)	Seekers from Private Institutions (%)	Seekers from Small - Medium Publics (%)	Seekers from Large Publics (%)
<b>MAINTAIN A JOURNAL OF EXPERIENCE</b>				
No	39	39	38	42
Optional	34	32	35	35
Required- Not Graded	14	15	14	13
<b>CONTACT WITH CAMPUS DURING WORK PERIOD</b>				
No				
Occasional email	31	31	29	33
Regular Communication via email, blogs, Twitter, etc.	41	42	43	39
Visit by Faculty or Advisor	17	16	16	17
	11	11	12	11
<b>DOCUMENT EXPERIENCE</b>				
Not required	32	32	30	35
Optional	27	25	28	28
Required - not graded	18	18	18	17
Required - graded	23	25	24	20
<b>PERFORMANCE EVALUATION</b>				
Not Required	13	13	13	13
Optional	39	40	39	39
Will Ask for One	48	47	48	48

## Interactions upon Completion of their Internships and Co-ops:

Students can take advantage of faculty, advisors, friends, and parents to discuss the skills and competencies they gained, confirm their career objectives, and strategize for the next steps in their transition into the workplace. Seekers were asked to rate how likely they were to meet with different

individuals to discuss the skills and competencies that they developed during their experience, where 1 = *no contact* and 5 = *extremely likely*.

Overall, it appears that students are eager to contact people who can help frame their experiences and assist them in taking the next steps in their transition from college to their professional lives.



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

- 60% are *very or extremely likely* to discuss their experience with a faculty member
- 63% are *very or extremely likely* to discuss their experience with their academic advisor
- 63% are *very or extremely likely* to discuss their experience with their internship or co-op advisor
- 53% are *very or extremely likely* to discuss their experience with a career advisor or internship advisor
- 73% are *very or extremely likely* to discuss their experience with classmates and close friends
- 77% are *very or extremely likely* to discuss their experience with their parents

**Table 7.**

**Expected Utilization of Campus Resources Upon Return from Internship or Co-op**

Contact	No Contact (%)	Somewhat Likely (%)	Fairly Likely (%)	Very Likely (%)	Extremely Likely (%)
Faculty	4	11	24	34	26
Academic advisor	5	11	21	34	29
Intern/Co-op advisor	5	9	22	34	29
Career advisor	9	14	24	31	22
Friends	2	7	17	33	40
Parents	6	6	11	23	54



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

## PART II: INTERNSHIP AND CO-OP COMPLETERS

### A. Credits

Of those respondents who completed an internship or a co-op, 47% received academic credit. If they enrolled for credit (averaging three credits per respondent), 76% were required to pay a fee for these credits. They reported working an average of 15 to 20 hours per week, though 20% reported working more than 40 hours per week. Table 9 shows the wide variation in the number of hours worked by all completers who received credit.



**Table 8.**  
Relationship Between Enrolled Credits and Hours Worked (Percentages)

Number of Credits Enrolled	Percent Enrolling for this Level of Credit	1 - 5 Hours Worked per Week	6 - 10 Hours Worked per Week	11 - 15 Hours Worked per Week	16 - 20 Hours Worked per Week	21 - 30 Hours Worked per Week	31 - 40 Hours Worked per Week	31 - 40 Hours Worked per Week
One	15	7	13	11	19	11	24	15
Two	9	7	18	12	11	13	18	22
Three	44	4	17	14	17	14	19	14
Four	12	4	16	9	18	14	22	16
Five or more	20	2	8	6	18	14	29	23

Even though the Chi-square statistic is significant—those earning fewer credits worked fewer hours and those earning more credits worked more hours—there is no clear pattern. In fact, the number of students who enrolled for three credits is distributed equally across the number of hours worked per week categories. When the number of credits is compared to the length of the experience, from three months or less to over one year, a similar pattern emerges. Those working three months or less tend to have enrolled for one credit (62%), yet 9% have had a year-long experience.

The evidence suggests that there is no benchmark for establishing the relationship between credits earned and hours worked for those credits. The standard rule of thumb (one class hour plus two hours outside of class earns one

credit) does not seem to apply.

Further complicating the issue is that individual institutions have differing policies on credits which vary both across institutions and within each institution. At institutions where a student's tuition covers a set number of credits each term, the number of internship credits can vary, depending on advisor approval. Where a student purchases individual credits, the policies may be different in the number that can be taken per internship experience and the cost can also be different from those students with a set tuition. We have not found any studies that untangle this conundrum.

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

**Table 9.**

**Credit Received for Internship or Co-op by Academic Major**

Academic Major	Paid (%)	Earn Credit (%)	One Credit (%)	Two Credits (%)	Three Credits (%)	Four Credits (%)	Five + Credits (%)
Agriculture & Natural Resources	66	62	9 25-26 hours	10 11-12 hours	46 23-24 hours	11 20-21 hours	24 26-27 hours
Arts & Humanities	43	42	14	10	49	11	16
Business	70	43	18	5	52	8	16
Communications	51	57	15	5	59	11	10
Education	34	55	8	9	61	7	15
Engineering	89	20	33	11	30	9	17
Sciences	62	33	21	12	40	15	11
Social Sciences	40	54	9	8	41	16	26
Health Sciences	39	69	15	9	37	15	24

However there were interesting differences among majors. Take engineering students for example. Approximately 33% of engineering students enrolled for one credit for their internship or co-op while another 30% enrolled for 3 credits. Students in the Social sciences and Health Sciences tend to enroll for more credit than other majors. When the number of hours worked each week by credit group is over laid on the table, the number of hours worked is nearly the same regardless of the credits taken. The figures from Agriculture & Natural Resources serve as an example with all other colleges following a similar pattern.

One-third of Engineering students enrolled for one credit and 30% enrolled for three credits – the most common level of credits per experience. Social Sciences and Health Sciences majors reported a high level of credits earned. When hours worked for each category of credit, a pattern similar to the one above predominated across all major categories. The average hours worked by Agriculture and Natural Resources majors is an example of the consistency of work hours regardless of credits earned.

## B. Co-op Completers

Co-op programs generally follow prescribed practices that integrate classroom learning with professional practice. Therefore approximately 650 co-op completers were analyzed separately from the internship completers. According to the National Commission on Cooperative Education, the Cooperative Education and Internship Association, and the Cooperative Education Division of the American Society of Engineering Education, six of the essential characteristics of a cooperative Education are pertinent to this study. They are: (1) the formal recognition of the co-op experience in student records through credits, grades or other notation on the transcript; (2) pre-employment preparation; (3) work of 40 hours per week if not enrolled in classes and 20 hours per week if enrolled, with the work period corresponding to the academic term (quarter, semester, etc.); (4) evaluation of the student by the employer; (5) participation in guided reflection; and (6) remuneration for work performed.

Co-op completers attended private institutions (40%), small- to medium-size public institutions (32%), and large public institutions (22%), with the remaining 6% enrolled

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

at two-year colleges. The majority were fourth-year (61%) male (51%) students who had earned a 3.35 GPA or higher (59%). Seventy-two percent (72%) were receiving some form of financial aid, and 64% reported family incomes of \$80,000 or less. Co-op completers were most likely to major in Engineering (41%) or Business (20%), although Social Science (11%) and Communications (9%) were also involved in co-ops.

While this group reported an average of two co-op experiences, 51% reported only one co-op experience while 24% had 3 to 4 co-op experiences. In their most recent experience, the typical work period lasted four months, although for 25%, the experience spanned an entire year. Working 40 hours per week was common, with a small segment reporting that they worked more than 40 hours per week. Slightly more than half (53%) received credit for their co-op and 14% reported that they were not paid for the work they performed. Of those who were paid, 52% earned credit while 63% of the unpaid earned credit.

## Motivations:

All co-op students were presented the list of six motivators for engaging in a co-op experience (see Table 1). Regardless of whether they were receiving academic credit or being paid, the most important set of motivators was **gaining professional experience** (acquiring new skills, preparation for the workplace, realistic preview of career path, and hands-on experience), which co-op completers rated as *very important*. For co-op participants receiving both no credit and no pay, their rating on degree factors (obtaining credit and completing degree requirements) was significantly lower than the ratings of co-ops receiving credit. Paid co-ops rated *exploration* (an organization, an industry, or participating in community service) as more important than did unpaid co-ops.

The rating for **full-time employment** was only a *moderately important* motivator, although students who were not paid for the experience rated it *very important*. The majority of unpaid co-ops were fourth- or fifth-year students. The labor market at the time of the study was doing poorly a result of

the 2008 financial crisis. A possible reason for the appearance of these unpaid co-ops is that students were trying to stay engaged in the workplace in any way possible until they could obtain a full-time position. Their employers may have been willing to offer or extend the duration of co-ops but were not in a position to remunerate participants.

## Resources:

When asked to rate the effectiveness of the resources they used to find their co-ops, co-op participants found working directly with their faculty, co-op advisor, or career advisor to be more effective than utilizing other resources. They indicated that friends, social media (Facebook, Twitter, text sources), and posted announcements were the least effective. Differences existed between different sub-groups:

- **Co-ops who received credit and were paid** reported that they relied almost exclusively on their career and co-op advisors to find their co-ops. They were much less likely to find or utilize off-campus resources. Among the available on-campus resources, they rated the career fair the highest as *fairly effective* in finding a co-op.
- **Co-ops who received no credit and were paid** did not rely on their advisors as much as they did on faculty, who they considered *fairly effective* as a resource. They were more likely to utilize their parents in their search for a co-op, followed by on-campus resources such as co-op postings in the college job/employment system, career fairs, and employer presentations. They were also more likely to use social media sources but they did not find them very effective.
- **Co-ops who were not paid but received credit** relied heavily on their faculty and co-op advisors whom they felt they were *very effective* as resources. They also depended on their parents and other students in their program. They were less likely to find other campus and off-campus resources effective in obtaining their co-op.



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

- **Co-ops who were not paid and did not receive credit** found help from their co-op advisor (reported that career advisor and faculty were not as effective) in obtaining their co-ops. However, they placed most of their energy in social media which they found “very effective.” Interestingly, this group was less likely to use their parents as a resource compared to the other groups.

## Performance Evaluation and Guidance:

While engaged in the workplace, co-ops are generally supported by faculty or their advisors through e-mail or site visits, the latter being a more common practice before

campuses experienced budget restrictions. According to the prescribed components of the co-op experience, students were required to submit documentation of their experience (usually a paper), as well as an evaluation from their work supervisor, upon completing their employment period. Regarding contact from campus while in the workplace, approximately 40% reported no communication from their faculty or advisors; nearly 70% provided documentation upon completing their experiences; and 80% received a performance evaluation from their work supervisor. However, these figures were strongly influenced by whether the co-op was receiving credit and whether the co-op was paid.

**Table 10.**

**Requirements for Successfully Completing Co-op , All Co-ops and Paid and Unpaid, Accounting for Credit or Non-Credit Assignments**

	All Co-ops (%)	Co-ops Paid (%)		Co-ops Unpaid (%)	
		Credit	No Credit	Credit	No Credit
<b>GUIDANCE FROM CAMPUS</b>					
None	40	33	50	28	36
Email Only Occasionally	30	36	27	25	18
Regular contact (email, Twitter, blog)	16	15	13	25	24
On-site visit	14	16	10	23	21
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>					
None Submitted	33	19	47	28	51
Optional– Completed	5	6	3	5	9
Required – No Grade	27	23	37	3	24
Required – Grade	35	52	13	64	15
<b>SUPERVISOR EVALUATION</b>					
Not Provided or Not Asked For	20	13	25	23	33
Optional – Accepted	3	2	3	3	3
Evaluation Provided	77	85	71	74	64

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

- **Co-ops who received credit and were paid** had higher expectations placed on them to provide documentation of their experiences and obtain a performance evaluation than were placed on other co-ops. They also received more guidance from campus resources than did paid, non-credit-bearing co-ops.
- **Co-ops who were not paid and received credit** obtained more support from their faculty and advisors while in the experience than did other co-ops. They are more likely to have a campus representative visit them at their workplace.
- **Co-ops who were not receiving credit, whether paid or unpaid**, were less likely than other co-ops to document their experience. Slightly fewer from this group received a performance evaluation.

## Accessing Campus Resources:

Upon returning to campus, co-ops have the opportunity to tap into a number of resources that may assist them in reflecting upon their experience and integrating their activities into their learning and professional lives. Co-op completers were asked to indicate with whom and how often they discussed their co-op experience and the number of interactions with each individual. One individual could serve in multiple capacities on campus; for instance, the co-op advisor could also be a faculty member, or the co-op advisor could also be the career advisor. The following table presents the level of interaction a student had with key contacts based on the type of conversations: brief chat, several meeting on skill development, and several meetings on career progress.

Co-ops were more likely to visit with their co-op advisor than with other campus contacts, but only slightly. They appeared to rely heavily on their parents to help them reflect on their experiences.

Table 11.

Resources Utilized by Co-ops upon Return from Assignment to Discuss Skills and Career Progress.

	No Contact	Brief Conversation Only	Several Meetings: Skills Development	Several Meetings: Career Progress
<b>ALL CO-OPS</b>				
Faculty	56	23	11	10
Academic Advisor	59	23	9	9
Co-op Advisor	37	33	17	13
Career Advisor	65	20	7	8
Friends	36	31	14	18
Parents	31	28	14	27
<b>PAID CO-OPS: CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	55	23	11	11
Academic Advisor	58	21	11	9
Co-op Advisor	35	34	19	12
Career Advisor	65	19	8	8
Friends	39	31	13	17
Parents	34	31	13	22

Table 11 Continued on Page 18

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Table 11. (CONTINUED)

Resources Utilized by Co-ops upon Return from Assignment to Discuss Skills and Career Progress.

	No Contact	Brief Conversation Only	Several Meetings: Skills Development	Several Meetings: Career Progress
<b>PAID CO-OPS: NO CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	63	22	9	6
Academic	65	23	6	6
<b>ADVISOR</b>				
Co-op Advisor	43	33	12	12
Career Advisor	69	20	5	6
Friends	33	34	16	17
Parents	27	26	16	31
<b>UNPAID CO-OPS: CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	39	23	21	17
Academic Advisor	47	30	11	12
Co-op Advisor	26	26	30	18
Career Advisor	56	21	9	14
Friends	40	28	11	21
Parents	37	28	12	25
<b>UNPAID CO-OPS: NO CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	49	30	9	12
Academic Advisor	49	25	15	12
Co-op Advisor	21	42	21	15
Career Advisor	58	21	15	6
Friends	33	24	15	27
Parents	30	24	12	33

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

The extent to which co-op respondents interacted with campus and off-campus contacts depended on whether the experience was credit bearing and/or for pay.

- **Co-ops who were paid but did not receive credit** were less likely to interact with campus resources upon return than others, relying on friends and parents to discuss their work experience.
- **Co-ops who were unpaid and did not receive credit** utilized campus resources more heavily than others but still relied on parents and friends to debrief their experience.

- **Credit bearing co-ops, whether paid or unpaid**, were more likely to interact with faculty and their co-op advisors, and less likely to interact with their parents, than non-credit bearing co-ops.

The final question in the survey asked co-op completers the number of times they have met with, or anticipate meeting with, their co-op advisor or career advisor prior to graduation, specifically to discuss the skills and competencies they developed on their experience. More than one-third reported that they had talked to no one about this topic. Approximately 20% had met at least once with one of these advisors. Some students did meet multiple times with their advisors. **Least likely to see any advisors upon their return were paid co-ops who received no credit.**

Table 12.

Number of Visits to Internship or Co-op Advisor after Returning to Campus

Number of Visits to Career or Co-op Advisor	All Co-ops	Paid and Receiving Credit	Paid and Not Receiving Credit (%)	Unpaid and Receiving Credit (%)	Unpaid and Not Receiving Credit (%)
None	38	36	43	26	36
One Time	22	21	23	19	27
Two Times	15	15	13	21	12
Three to Four Times	15	15	14	19	9
Five or More Times	9	12	6	14	15

## C. Internships Completers

Of the approximately 5,780 respondents who had recently completed an internship, 45% attended private colleges, 26% attended small to medium public colleges, and 28% attended large public institutions, with only a few enrolled at two-year colleges (2%). The majority were white (72%), fourth-year (65%), female (70%) students who had earned a 3.35 GPA or higher (62%). Sixty-six percent (66%) received some form of financial aid, with approximately 57% reporting family incomes of \$80,000 or less. Internship completers were most likely to be enrolled in Business (26%) and Social Science (22%) majors, with others enrolled in Arts & Letters (12%), Communication (11%), and Engineering (10%).

Approximately 60% reported having one internship experience and 28% had two experiences with 12% reporting three or more. In their most recent experience, the typical work period was three to six months (65%), though 11% worked for a full year. Interns typically worked 20 to 30 hours per week; 27% indicated they worked 40 hours per week and 19% said they worked more than 40 hours per week. Twenty percent (20%) reported they worked more hours than expected based on their interviews and initial contact with their hosts. **Slightly less than half (46%) received credit for their internship**; among them, 76% were required to pay tuition for these credits. **Fifty-seven percent (57%) of all internship completers were paid for their internship work**, and 33% of these paid students were also receiving credit. Of



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

those in unpaid positions, 63% were enrolled for credit while 37% did not receive credit.

## Motivations:

Internship students were presented with the same list of reasons for engaging in an internship experience as co-ops and seekers. Four motivators under the category ***gaining professional experience*** were clearly more important than the others: *acquiring new skills*, *preparation for the workplace*, *realistic preview of career path*, and *hands-on experience*. Comparisons by student characteristics revealed the following:

- **Men** were more likely than women to be motivated by earning money and by the desire to obtain full-time employment. **Women** placed more importance on completing degree requirements, receiving credit, and fulfilling community service obligations.
- Institutional type showed few differences, with the exception that students from **private schools** were less concerned than students from public institutions about earning money and obtaining full-time employment. Students from **small to medium public institutions** were more likely than students from other institutions to place higher importance on completing degree requirements and earning credit.
- Students with **GPA's below 3.35** rated nearly every reason higher in importance than did peers with higher grades. Significant differences appeared on earning income, obtaining full-time employment, fulfilling community service, completing degree requirements, and earning credit. For students reporting grades below 2.70, the internship seemed to be a central element of their college experience, with an emphasis on degree completion and credits. Overall, they placed a much higher importance on all aspects of the experience than did those with higher grades.
- Students from **low income families** (\$40,000 or lower) placed higher importance than students from higher

income households on all reasons to be involved in an internship, including earning income, obtaining full-time employment, and completing degree requirements.

- Little variation was found among **academic majors**, although Agriculture, Education, and Health Sciences students placed relatively higher importance on completing degree requirements and earning credit, while Business and Engineering were more concerned with earning income and obtaining full-time employment.

Interesting differences were found when comparing credit, non-credit, paid, and unpaid internship responses:

- An intern who **was not receiving credit and was unpaid** rated **degree** factors (obtaining credit and completing degree requirements) significantly lower than did other interns.
- An intern who **was not receiving credit and was being paid** was more likely to focus on **earning money** as a prime motivator.
- The rating for **full-time employment** was only *moderately important* among all completers, unless the intern **was being paid, in which case** the rating was slightly higher.

## Resources:

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the different resources they used to obtain their internships. Overall, campus individuals (faculty, internship advisor, and career advisor) were considered to be *moderately effective*, while family and friends were considered to be *very effective* in finding an internship. **Career fairs were rated poorly as a resource.** Interns were more likely than co-op students to engage in social media searches, but they reported this approach as only *fairly effective* for obtaining an internship. Differences emerged when demographic characteristics were considered.

- **Men** considered faculty, family, and the career fair to be more effective for them, while **women** found faculty

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

and family more effective. Neither men nor women found Twitter/email announcements particularly effective in their search. Men rated online resources and peers in their academic program as least effective. Women found their friends and employer presentations to be less effective. Men rated their friends, career fairs, and employer presentations significantly higher than did women.

- Students with **GPA's below 3.35** reported that their families were their most effective resource. Those students with grades **below 2.7** also included their friends, while students with 2.7 to 3.35 GPA's included faculty on their list. Students with grades above 3.70 relied on faculty, while those earning grades between 3.35 and 3.70 found internship advisors and families to be more effective. **High-achieving students (GPA's above 3.35) found campus-based events such as career fairs, employer presentations, and internship postings on career center web systems to be less effective than did students with lower grades.** High GPA students are more likely to have more opportunities available to them, already receive attention from faculty and advisors, and are likely to be promoted to employers outside of event-focused activities.
- All students, regardless of the institution they attended, agreed that faculty were moderately effective in helping them. Students enrolled at private and small- to medium-sized public institutions also relied on their families, while **students at large public schools found career fairs and online resources more effective.**
- Family income produced sharp contrasts. Students from families with income below \$80,000 found that faculty and internship advisors were the most effective resources. Students reporting family income between \$80,000 and \$120,000 believed that their families, faculty, and internship advisors were the most effective. **Students with family incomes over \$120,000 relied heavily on their family, followed by online resources. They found most campus resources to be less effective than did students from households below \$120,000.**

Comparisons made between credit, non-credit, paid, and unpaid interns revealed some interesting patterns. Students who received credit for their internships but were not being paid generally found that working directly with their faculty, internship advisor, or career advisor was more effective than utilizing other resources. Those interns who did not receive credit found their parents more helpful than other resources, particularly those resources located on campus.

- **Interns who received credit and were paid** reported that they relied almost exclusively on their parents to help them obtain an internship (*very effective*), while faculty, internship advisors, and career advisors were only *fairly effective* in their internship search. This group was much less likely to find other on-campus resources effective. They were modestly successful using social media to locate an internship.
- **Interns who received credit and were not paid** reported that their faculty, internship advisor, and career advisor were *very effective* in helping them obtain their internships. However, they found other campus resources, such as career fairs, presentations by companies, and announcements posted on department bulletin boards, only *somewhat effective*. This group rated career fairs the most *ineffective way* to find an internship.
- **Interns who received no credit and were not paid** relied primarily on two resources to locate their positions: their parents (*very effective*) and online/media resources. They did interact with their faculty and advisors, but found them only *fairly effective*. This group was not likely to find other campus resources helpful and tended to turn to their classmates for assistance.
- **Interns who were paid and did not receive credit** relied heavily on two sources: their parents and the career fair. In fact, this group found the career fair to be more effective than did any other group. They were less likely to be working with their faculty and advisors, but if they chose to do so, they primarily sought out the help of their faculty.

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

## Performance Evaluation and Guidance:

Unlike co-ops, who receive support from campus during their workplace experience, interns may not have the same level of interactions, depending on their academic program. Also, the requirement for interns to document experiences often differs from the requirements of co-ops. Approximately 50% of interns had no contact with a campus representative during their assignment, 45% were not required to provide any documentation of their internship experience, and 40% did not receive a performance evaluation upon completion of their assignment. Comparisons based on student characteristics revealed:

- **Men and women** did not differ significantly on guidance and documentation; approximately 50% indicated that they received no guidance from campus and 45% reported they did not document their experiences. Women were more likely than men to prepare written documentation for a grade. Women (61%) were slightly more likely to receive an evaluation than men (57%).
- Few differences were found between different **types of institutions**. Fifty percent of students from private and large public institutions indicated that they did not receive guidance from campus, and 45% did not provide any documentation of their experiences. Students from small to medium public institutions were more likely to have contact with faculty or advisors during their assignment (60%) and to prepare documentation of their experience (65%). Sixty percent of their assignments were graded. These students also were more likely to be evaluated upon completion of their assignment: 64% compared with 59% for the other groups.
- Family income played a significant role in shaping the internship experience. **Students with family income below \$80,000 had more interaction with campus during their assignment (60%) than higher income students (45%).** They were more likely than students from higher income households to produce a report on their experience (63% vs. 45% to 50%), or to have their report graded (58% vs. 50%). **Students with family incomes**

**above \$120,000 were less likely to receive an evaluation (53%) than were students from households under \$40,000 (64%) or between \$40,000 and \$80,000 (64%).**

- **GPA comparisons produced no significant differences.** Students with higher GPAs were slightly more likely than students with lower grades to complete documentation (paper), and slightly less likely to receive a performance evaluation.
- **Significant differences did emerge when comparing across academic majors.** Education and Health Sciences majors were more likely to receive guidance from faculty, be required to document their experiences, and obtain performance evaluations. Given the close relationship between learning and professional practice in these majors, the importance of these conditions is understandable. Communications and Physical and Biological Sciences majors also reported higher levels of guidance, documentation, and evaluation. Least likely to be provided guidance and documentation were Arts & Humanities and Business majors; and Engineering majors were not required to document their experiences. Performance evaluations were less likely to be required from Arts & Humanities and Physical and Biological Sciences majors.

Comparisons were made based on whether the internships were paid or unpaid and whether they were credit bearing or non-credit bearing. Students who received credit were generally expected to provide some form of documentation about their experience. In some cases, faculty also required a performance evaluation from the internship host. However, no benchmarks on expectations exist for internships as they do for co-op participants. Expectations of interns were strongly influenced by whether the student was receiving credit and whether the internship was paid.

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

**Table 13.**

**Requirements for Successfully Completing Internship, Overall and Paid and Unpaid, Accounting for Credit and Non-Credit Assignments**

	All Interns (%)	Interns Paid (%)		Interns Unpaid (%)	
		Credit	No Credit	Credit	No Credit
<b>GUIDANCE FROM CAMPUS</b>					
None	46	34	63	23	61
Email Only Occasionally	24	35	13	38	15
Regular contact (email, Twitter, blog)	16	16	12	22	12
On-site visit	14	15	12	17	13
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>					
None Submitted	45	15	68	14	75
Optional– Completed	5	4	5	4	6
Required – No Grade	19	21	22	17	12
Required – Grade	32	61	5	65	6
<b>SUPERVISOR EVALUATION</b>					
Not Provided or Not Asked For	40	23	54	19	63
Optional – Accepted	6	5	5	5	9
Evaluation Provided	54	72	41	76	28

- **Interns who received credit and were paid** occasionally received support through email from faculty or advisors during their assignment. Among those who prepared documentation of their experience when they returned to campus (66%), 85% received grades. Seventy-seven percent (77%) obtained a performance evaluation from their internship supervisor.
- **Interns who received credit and were unpaid** received the most support from a campus representative during the experience (77%). This group reported the highest level of constant support from campus (40% with email or on-site visit). More than 85% submitted documentation of their experience (nearly all were graded) and more than 80% provided evaluations from their supervisors.
- **Interns who did not receive credit and were paid** reported little contact with campus (only 37%) during their assignment. Only 32% provided some sort of documentation about their experience and only 46% obtained an evaluation from their supervisors.
- **Interns who did not receive credit and were not paid** were also not likely to have contact with campus during their experience (only 39%), prepare documentation of their experience (25%), or obtain an evaluation from their supervisors (37%). **Interns who were not receiving credit (regardless if they were being paid) appear to be**



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

**pursuing an internship completely unguided, even while away from campus on their internship assignment during the experience.**

## Accessing Campus Resources:

All students returning from internships, regardless of whether or not the experience was credit-bearing, have resources and support available to them to make sense of their experiences in terms of skill development and career progression. Whether they elect to use these resources is another question. In Part I, we saw that while seekers reported their intention to make heavy use of campus resources upon their return to campus, in actuality students surveyed failed to capitalize on the resources available to them:

- 60% of seekers expected to be *very* or *extremely likely* to discuss their experience with a faculty member; only **48% of returners met (most often briefly) with a faculty member.**
- 63% of seekers expected to be *very* or *extremely likely* discuss their experience with an academic advisor; only **43% of returners met (most often briefly) with their academic advisor.**
- 63% of seekers expected to be *very* or *extremely likely* to discuss their experience with their internship or co-op advisor; **58% of returners met (most often briefly) with their internship or co-op advisor.**
- 53% of seekers expected to be *very* or *extremely likely* to discuss their experience with a career advisor or internship advisor; only **29% of returners met (most often briefly) with their career advisor.**
- 73% of seekers expected to be *very* or *extremely likely* to discuss their experience with their classmates and close friends; **65% of returners actually discussed their experiences with close friends.**
- 77% of seekers expected to be *very* or *extremely likely* to discuss their experiences with their parents; **71% of returners actually discussed their experiences with their parents.**

Upon comparing the utilization of campus resources by returning interns across student characteristics, several revealing differences were found:

- **Men and women** did not differ significantly on their level of contact with any of the resources measured. Women were more likely than men to have career discussions with their parents.
- Students from **large public institutions were less likely** than students from other schools to visit with faculty, academic advisors, and career advisors. They were also somewhat less likely to visit with their internship advisors. Students from private institutions were more likely than their public school peers to seek out their parents for post-experience discussions.
- **Low income students** (under \$80,000) **were more likely** than students from higher income families to utilize campus resources. They especially sought out internship advisors (though they did not utilize career advisors as much) and faculty. However, they were more likely to involve their parents in post-experience discussions. Students with family incomes over \$120,000 had very little interaction with campus resources upon their return, spending more time with their parents.
- **Grades did not appear to influence** the level of interaction with faculty, advisors, and friends upon return. Students with grades above 3.7 did visit with faculty slightly more than did students with lower grades. Students with high GPAs (above 3.7) and low GPAs (below 2.7) were slightly less likely than students with GPAs of 2.7 to 3.7 to discuss their internships with their parents.

## A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

- **Comparisons by academic major found significant differences for interactions with faculty, academic advisors, internship advisors, and parents.** The following table lists majors that rated either significantly higher or lower than other majors in the level of contact with four key resources.

The rate of interaction with on-campus resources varied significantly between students with credit- and non-credit-bearing internships. Interns with unpaid, credit-bearing experiences were more likely to spend time with faculty: 64% reported spending time with a faculty member upon their return. On the other hand, only 35% of interns in non-credit bearing internships spent any time with faculty.

**Table 14.**

**Levels of Interaction with Internship or Career Advisors upon Returning to Campus by Academic Major**

Resource	High Levels of Interaction	Low Levels of Interaction
Faculty	Education, Health Sciences	Business, Engineering, and Social Sciences
Academic Advisor	Education, Physical and Biological Sciences	Business
Internship Advisor	Health Sciences, Communications	Engineering, Business
Parents	Communications, Business, Engineering, Physical and Biological Sciences	Education, Health Sciences



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Table 15.

Comparison of Resource Utilization for Internships with and without Credit

	No Contact (%)	Brief Conversation Only (%)	Several Meetings: Skills Development (%)	Several Meetings: Career Progress (%)
<b>ALL INTERNS</b>				
Faculty	52	25	13	10
Academic Advisor	57	23	10	9
Co-op Advisor	42	27	18	13
Career Advisor	71	16	7	6
Friends	35	30	17	18
Parents	29	24	16	31
<b>PAID INTERNS: CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	45	26	15	14
Academic Advisor	47	28	12	12
Co-op Advisor	34	30	20	16
Career Advisor	64	21	8	7
Friends	35	28	18	19
Parents	29	22	16	33
<b>PAID INTERNS: NO CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	62	21	10	7
Academic Advisor	70	18	7	5
Co-op Advisor	54	21	15	10
Career Advisor	77	13	6	4
Friends	33	32	18	17
Parents	26	26	16	32
<b>UNPAID INTERNS: CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	36	33	17	14
Academic Advisor	40	30	16	14
Co-op Advisor	26	35	23	16
Career Advisor	66	18	9	7
Friends	37	29	15	19
Parents	34	24	12	30

Table 15 Continued on Page 27

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

Table 15. (CONTINUED)

Comparison of Resource Utilization for Internships With and Without Credit

	No Contact (%)	Brief Conversation Only (%)	Several Meetings: Skills Development (%)	Several Meetings: Career Progress (%)
<b>UNPAID INTERNS: NO CREDIT</b>				
Faculty	66	18	9	7
Academic Advisor	68	18	7	6
Co-op Advisor	50	24	16	10
Career Advisor	73	15	7	5
Friends	33	31	19	17
Parents	28	22	18	31

- **Interns who received credit and were paid** were likely to see their internship advisor (66%) or faculty (55%) upon return. Only 36% spent time with their career advisor. Slightly over 70% met with their parents, with much of that time spent discussing their career options.
- **Interns who received credit and were unpaid** spent the most time with their faculty (64%) and internship advisor (74%) upon their return. Only one-third of this group visited with a career advisor. Parents played a key role (66%) in assisting students to connect the internship with skills and career options.
- **Interns who did not receive credit and were paid** spent little time with faculty, career advisors, and even internship advisors (less than 50% saw one upon return). Three-quarters (75%) discussed their internship with their parents. They were more likely to receive feedback on their skill development from friends rather than from on-campus advisors.

**Interns who did not receive credit and were not paid** were likely to see their internship advisor upon return (50%), but very few interacted with faculty or other on-campus professionals. Most of these students worked closely with their parents to discern what they gained from their experiences.

A final question asked interns the number of times, prior to graduation, they would meet or have already met with either their intern advisor or a career advisor to discuss the skills and competencies they developed while on their experiences. Interns receiving credit were significantly more likely to work with a career or internship advisor when they returned to campus; only one-third indicated that they did not meet with an advisor.

The situation is very different for those not receiving credit: approximately 60% did not meet with a career or internship advisor upon returning. When they did, it was likely to be only once or twice.

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

**Table 16.**

Number of Visits of Returning Interns with Internship or Career Advisors, Paid and Unpaid Accounting for Credit and Non-Credit Assignments

Number of Visits to Career or Co-op Advisor	All Interns (%)	Paid and Receiving Credit (%)	Paid and Not Receiving Credit (%)	Unpaid and Receiving Credit (%)	Unpaid and Not Receiving Credit (%)
None	49	37	63	31	58
One time	17	21	14	19	17
Two times	14	16	10	18	12
3 to 4 times	8	12	5	12	5
5 or more times	12	14	8	19	8

## SUMMARY: BEFORE AND AFTER

We set out to examine interns and co-ops upon their return to campus to determine how they utilized campus resources before, during, and after their experience against a backdrop of the expectations of those seeking an internship.

### Seekers expectations were:

- 75% of those with academic credit available to them stated they would likely purchase credit with their experience.
- The majority of seekers expected to rely on faculty for assistance in finding an internship or co-op, for support during the experience, and for guidance when they returned.
- More than two-thirds expected to seek out campus resources upon return to assist them in reflecting and integrating their experiences.
- Overall, seekers expected to utilize the wide range of campus resources available to them as they pursued their professional experience.

### What was learned from those who completed an internship or co-op:

- Considerably fewer than predicted actually enrolled for credit – less than half.
- Faculty were viewed as only moderately effective as a resource. Credit-bearing internships and co-ops tended to utilize on-campus resources to find their host organizations. In contrast, students tended to explore non-credit opportunities through off-campus resources.
- There was a large gap between completers' predicted pursuit of interactions with faculty and advisors and their actual pursuit of these interactions upon returning to campus.
- Parents played a key role in finding internship opportunities for their sons and daughters as well as in guiding them through the post-experience discussion about skill development and career opportunities. Parents played a particularly important role for students from households with higher incomes (above \$80,000).
- Lower income students tended to place a great deal of importance on the internship, not only to earn money, but also to gain experience and complete degree requirements. For students from families with incomes below \$80,000, the internship (or similar experience) appeared to be tightly woven into their educational experience.



# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

In the final analysis, the gap between pre-experience expectations and intentions and post-experience realities was quite large. Students earning credit did utilize a variety of campus resources throughout their experiences. Yet, upon returning to campus, a sizeable segment failed to engage any of these resources in reviewing their experiences.

## EMERGING THOUGHTS

Interpretations of these results, especially of the patterns for utilizing campus resources, are as varied as the 200+ institutions that participated in the study. The most striking revelation was the lack of re-engagement with campus resources upon return to campus.

If the economy were robust and college recruiting strong, a well-founded conclusion could have been that students returned to school with job offers and did not need to follow through with internship or career advisors. In that case, only those who discovered through their experiences that they did not want to pursue that career path, or those who had a poor experience that did not set them up well for their transition, would seek out support. However, the survey was administered in the midst of a significant economic recession and less than 20% of participants reported having job offers at the time of the survey. A more reasonable explanation for the lack of resource utilization might be that students were not optimistic about their opportunities, which discouraged them in continuing their job search.

Another plausible argument might be the “checklist mentality” of many students today. At freshman orientation, students generally receive a list of things to do while in college. Most have an academic plan, and they check off courses as they complete them. They also have a long list of activities to pursue during their four years, including but not limited to study abroad, undergraduate research, student organizations, fraternities/sororities, civic or volunteer engagement, intramural sports, and of course internships. The internship or other professional experience might top the list, as nearly every student knows that this experience serves as the entry into the workplace. But little attention is given to how internships integrate into the student’s course

work and overall experience. The objective is simply to check it off the list.

So where is Career Services in this picture? Over 60% of students expect to be extremely likely to visit with a career advisor upon return, yet less than 30% actually do so. On some campuses, the career and internship advisors are in the same office, and may be the same person. Yet on more campuses than not, internship and career advisors are located in different offices and even in different divisions within the institution (academic versus student affairs, for example). That does not mean that Career Services have an unimportant role in the internship process. They provide the computerized infrastructure to manage the internship process, build connections to employers who need professional trainees, and host events that bring students and employers together. These activities are viewed as a backdrop to the actual experience. But are these services enough to insure that students are gaining the most from their internship experiences? Adequate resources would help but also positioning resources more effectively may also be warranted.

A serious examination of the allocation of resources (time, staff, and dollars) across the undergraduate experience reveals that most Career Services load their resources toward connecting and preparing seniors for jobs. Of course, they also spend time assisting younger students who need to be directed or redirected considering the alignment between their interests and possible career opportunities. Yet a large number of students who think they do not need assistance to find a job, as well as seniors who have not started the job search process, easily slip through the cracks.

What the gap suggests is that too many career resources may be allocated to the wrong places. Schools need to consider front-loading resources (placing them at the front of the internship process) to target students during the seeker stage. In a workshop, seminar, or course, sophomores and early juniors can be introduced to the aspects of being a professional. They can identify skills and competencies to build during professional practice, including preparing credentials (resumes, cover letters, etc.) to present to host

# A COMPARISON OF CREDIT AND NON-CREDIT INTERNSHIPS IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THE UTILIZATION OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

organizations, and developing strategies to identify and locate the best experience. Finally, these resources can help students integrate all their collegiate experiences. In such a scenario, fewer resources need to be allocated to senior students because they are already prepared for the job search.

The career services profession needs to have a deep and thought-provoking conversation about ways to accommodate new technologies, address the push by employers for earlier engagement with students, and connect with students' lives.

## CONCLUSION

Within this survey population, about 80% of the respondents expect to participate in an internship or co-op, or have already done so. A few have chosen to pursue other paths to reach their aspirations. More can be done, however, to maximize the benefit of the internship experience for students. We can develop strategies such as front-loading resources that prepare seekers for the internship or nudging completers into environments where they can reflect and integrate their experiences before initiating the job search. Other options for strengthening the internship experience exist. We just need the will power to seek them out.

Lastly, the evidence clearly suggests that parents play key roles in all phases of the internship process. For too long, we have kept parents on the sidelines. Every effort must be made to bring them into partnership with internship and career advisors. We need to leverage parents by providing them resources and guidance on how to assist their sons and daughters in the internship process. We also need to find ways to collaborate with them upon completion of the internship to insure that their students are positioned well for the full-time job search and eventual transition into the workplace. Leaders in parent partnerships are beginning to emerge, especially among private colleges, and they can serve as examples for us all.

# INTERN BRIDGE

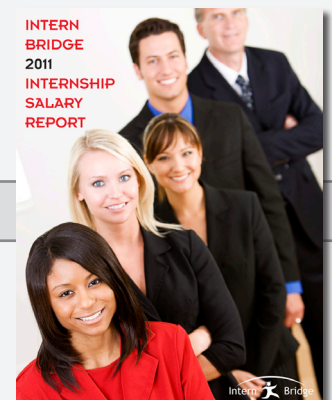
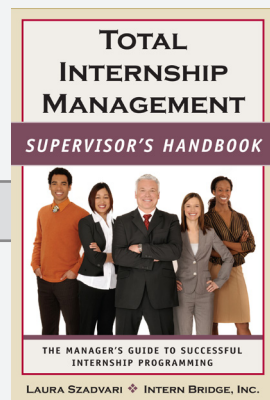
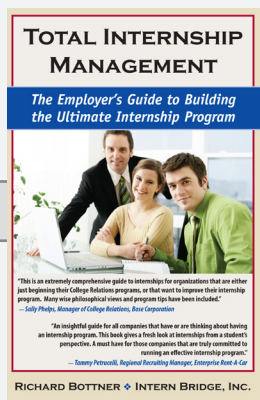
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