

HOUSE COMMERCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Amanda Chase

Internship Coordinator

University of Vermont

At the University of Vermont we are actively working to build a larger culture of internships. It is worth noting that the term “internship” can vary in definition – sometimes it may describe a casual learning and working experience, and other times it may refer to a highly structured program that is overseen by a faculty member. At UVM there are no regulation about compensation or credit (students may earn both, neither, or a combination of the two), though we highly encourage employers to pay students.

While we do not have a single university-wide program, we do have a university-wide resources and internship programs for specific departments/colleges.

Career Center: Campus-wide resources

As the Internship Coordinator in the Career Center, my [Amanda Chase’s] role is that of a centralized coordinator and consultant for students, employers, and faculty/staff. Along with a team of career counselors in the Career Center, I promote and support internships largely for undergraduate students. I also work to develop standardized policies, procedures, and systems for the entire University.

We serve:

Students

Along with a team of career counselors, I work directly with students to help with internship preparedness. This includes the internship search, resume and cover letter development, and interview prep. We offer workshops, host an internship-specific event, visit classes, and work with students in one-on-one appointments and drop-ins.

Employers

We work with employers to cultivate new internship sites and to design and promote high quality experiences. We post jobs and internships in a database where students can search for opportunities and submit applications. Working directly with employers, we source and develop internship opportunities, and provide outreach and education on the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employers often visit campus to provide information sessions, table in our student center, attend job fairs, and interview candidates.

Faculty/Staff

I consult with UVM staff and faculty to collaborate effectively and develop consistent procedures and internship documentation (like Learning Contracts and Memorandums of Understanding).

Department/College-specific Programs and Resources

Rubenstein (College of the Environment and Natural Resources) Perennial Internship Program

The college's in-house internship coordinator administers the program, which offers 30 paid internship opportunities. ~100 students apply for these competitive positions, and the college offers matching funds to pay student salaries. The internship coordinator also supports numerous other internships that happen outside of this one program.

College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences

CEMS has a long history of supporting internships, and the new CEMS internship coordinator (hired in November 2014) is currently developing a program to work with area businesses. These paid internship opportunities are in engineering and computer science.

College of Arts and Sciences

The new Arts and Sciences Internship Coordinator (who starts today – 2/4) will create new internship opportunities in the community, develop and administer a new scholarship fund for internships, and organize several new interdisciplinary internship courses in the college.

Food Systems Internship Program

An internship coordinator was hired in the summer of 2013 to establish internship opportunities in the food systems discipline and connect students with these internships. 75 students found internships through this program in 2014.

Other discipline-specific internship courses

Sociology, service learning, community development

Funding Resources

Though we always encourage employers to pay their interns, UVM also has five distinct, competitive scholarship opportunities available that help cover the costs of students' internships. The five funds have differing criteria and focuses:

- Internships with non-profit organizations (Anna Whitcomb Scholarship)
- Internships focusing on the environment (Kate Svitek Award)
- Internships with a service learning component (Samuel Fishman Scholarship)
- Students in the Honors College (Career Development Award)
- Internships with a research/creative component (Public Impact Fund)

These funds provide some level of financial support to ~40 students a year.