Internship Program Development and Pedagogies:
Work-Based Learning in Higher Education and at Kennesaw State University

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Abstract
This FLC convened with four primary foci in mind: (1) the history, theory , practice, and pedagogical aims of internship programs in higher education; (2) available resources for internship coordinators and course instructors to enhance learning goals and outcomes; (3) how internship courses can balance the needs of students, community partners, and the university; and (4) opportunities for assessment, research, and scholarship surrounding internship pedagogies, courses, theory, and practice. This paper will address the two areas where we focused most heavily: items one and two. The approach is to first articulate more broadly how these areas relate to college internships generally and then consider these foci more locally within the context of Kennesaw State University and the FLC members. Examples from the internship programs and courses led by the internship coordinators who participated in the FLC will also be shared as well as considerations for future exploration and development.

Background
This faculty learning community convened at a unique time. When we started the FLC in Fall 2019, it was the first year of Kennesaw State University's Quality Enhancement Plan ("QEP") that included "internships" as a one of the three areas of emphasis. Recognized by the American Association of Colleges and Universities ("AACU") as a High Impact Practice (Kuh n.p.), the inclusion of internships as part of the QEP created rich opportunities for exploring the KSU taxonomies, resources, and opportunities. However, by Spring 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic was upon us, resulting in significant logistical and teaching challenges for faculty members, including all members of the FLC. Some students faced onsite internships moving remote without sufficient technologies and supervision; some partners were facing furloughs, restructurings, and closings. What became clear was that while we all knew internships require in-depth coordination by faculty supporting students in these roles, the administrative intensity now needed by faculty advisors was very demanding. In addition, we had developed a network of colleagues with whom we could consult regardless of our disciplinary focus.

By the end of the school year, faculty in the FLC—and presumably internship coordinators across the university—were left considering what internships and internship courses would look like going forward. We needed to rethink the traditional internship structure and consider not only student and university needs and goals but also the complex logistical and economic problems community partners and employers were now facing in the wake of a global

pandemic. There were short-term and long-term considerations, but what was universally understood was that the nature of the college internship is changing and will likely continue to evolve. As we looked to summer and fall internships, we found ourselves in difficult times with internship providers spread thin, students struggling to find internships, and internship programs being canceled. As administrators of departmental internship programs and the teachers of internship classes we realized that we were all stretched as faculty members, and, at the same time, had to creatively work within available structures to meet university requirements and student needs for pre-professional experiences.

What became abundantly clear during the many conversations occurring between the members of the FLC throughout this year were that were the approaches to course design, internship structure, and administrative/faculty support varied based upon the pedagogical structures and support systems established within our diversity of departments and disciplines. In addition, we also realized the different degree programs had distinctive practices based on the industries that align with student careers. For example, a computer engineering student who was paid by their internship provider and worked onsite could be classified as an "employee"; in contrast, an English Department student working with a literary journal in an unpaid internship was not an employee; however, both of these scenarios were providing valuable experiences for students, but the organizations had different priorities for and relationships with interns due to the nature of their work and the needs of their specific field.

Our FLC was comprised of faculty members working in six different disciplines, and we were able to confirm quickly that we shared a common belief that internships can be transformational learning and professional experiences for students during their academic careers. At the same time, we saw that the structure of student internships and corresponding courses varied greatly, thus we had to discern the differences in our disciplinary programming and overcome a hurdle to find common goals and needs. Then, at the end of the year, we found ourselves pushing to maintain internship and other work-based learning programs with pedagogical support in a world where a public health crisis had upended the established best practices we relied upon, leaving us evaluating how to rebuild and retool in a chaotic, uncertain, and socially-distanced world.

Focus One: The History, Theory, Practice, and Pedagogical Aims in Higher Education
George Kuh's work in the area of college internships provides the description adopted by the AACU for internships as a HIPs practice:

> Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member. (Kuh np)

Internships can be paid or unpaid and *Fact Sheet #71, Internships Under the Fair Labor Standards Act* created by the US Department of Labor sets forth the criteria for evaluating the

work conditions for interns. Specifically, the fact sheet provides, "The FLSA requires 'for-profit' employers to pay employees for their work. Interns and students, however, may not be "employees" under the FLSA—in which case the FLSA does not require compensation for their work" (US Department of Labor, np). This, however, raises both legal and ethical considerations for colleges and universities offering internship and co-op courses and providing mentoring and support for students engaged in these practices. As Ross Perlin contends in *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy*, "illegal internships are flourishing as never before . . . internships are replacing untold numbers of full-time jobs . . . [i]gnoring system flaws, universities are increasingly making internships a requirement for graduation" (xvii). And even if internships are paid, Perlin questions if the wage is fair and suggests that the government should step in to establish legislation protecting interns and interns should be organizing themselves to provide protection from abuse and unfair labor practices (223). And in our discussions, we recognized it can be difficult to advocate for our students and appropriately endeavor to evaluate paid vs. unpaid internships and the legality of these situations. In addition, we questioned if we were (a) qualified to do so; (b) wondered who should make those determinations; and (c) how to manage the relationships with organizations and students offering a range of compensation—monetary and other—through internship practices.

Before moving into understanding the landscape of US and global internships, better understanding how internships found their way into the curricula can be useful. Louis Menand's work *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University System* provides theories regarding how nineteenth-century social, economic, and educational changes were significant influences on the focus on career paths for students. Menand asserts that the movement to professional degrees and away from the humanities can be attributed to Charles William Eliot, the president of Harvard University from 1869 to 1909. Eliot made a notable change to the curriculum by making bachelor's degrees prerequisites for admission to medical and law schools. As Menand sees it, Eliot essentially "professionalized the professions" (47). Prior to this decision, nineteenth-century students selected either a professional school or college track for their educational aims. Although Eliot's decision seemed support the idea of a college education to be about "knowledge for its own sake;" this actually resulted in the construction of an education system that provided for liberal education first and professionalization training second.

College was now tied directly to career paths. In the years that followed, college programs started integrating more professional training, including internships and co-ops, into the undergraduate curricula for those who would not necessarily attend graduate, law, or medical schools. In addition, considerations of apprenticeship models and programs are also relevant to this exploration. Menand's work recognizes that significant educational reform within the American system occurred throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which resulted in specialized degrees that endeavor to provide avenues directly into defined professions—degree programs that often moved students away from general, liberal arts programs to linear-track, job-focused degrees. Menand contends that the system that associates college with ideas of the love of learning and knowledge for its own sake, shifted to a curriculum designed with "real-world" goals in mind (49–50).

The desire for education to prepare students directly for their careers has become a significant focus in recent years. Media outlets commonly explore what students expect to gain from their college educations and what parents and the public view as the purpose of the degrees earned. Consider the work of Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa in *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses,* Andrew Delbanco in *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be,* Richard P. Keeling and Richard H. Hersch's *We're Losing Our Minds: Rethinking American Higher Education* as well as Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus's *Higher Education: How Colleges are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids—and What We Can Do About It* . Each of these publications acknowledge the call for more assessment, accountability, and oversight of university programs. Richard Keeling and Richard Hersch go a step further through their contention that "American college graduates aren't adequately prepared for work" (2). University mission statements and vision statements, including KSU's, often respond to these demands by focusing on student goals alongside of academic and teaching aims. While this may seem to create hard tasks for college professors, it actually presents opportunities for internship programs to gain wide-reaching support and provides space and resources for impactful pre-professional activities that can help students find meaningful work within their fields of interest.

Both Menand and Perlin's books were the primary texts we relied upon in the FLC to better understand the role of internships in the American education system. Each of us teach undergraduate internship courses and came to the group with knowledge about internships within our disciplines from not only from our time as instructors and internship coordinators but also from our experience either directly in the private and public sectors. What we learned and universally agreed upon is that internships provide valuable learning opportunities that prepare our students for their careers, give them opportunities to apply what they learn in their coursework, and show employers how students can and will contribute to twenty-first-century workplaces.

Focus Two: Available Resources for Internship Coordinators and Course Instructors

When we convened in Fall 2019, what we learned was that our classes and programs each had distinctive structures and goals. For example, the English Department's Engl 3398/Internship course learning outcomes focus largely on writing, research, and communication, while the History Department's Hist 3398/Public History Internship emphasizes project management and professional development experiences, alongside of acquiring knowledge about the kinds of career paths that could be available to students. Some classes, such as the Department of Psychological Science's Psyc 4498/Capstone Internship in Psychology, meets weekly and is highly competitive for the limited student enrollment. Some courses are face-to-face, whereas other internship courses, are primarily online, asynchronous courses. There were also courses that had hybrid components, some even incorporating remote technologies for class meetings and conferences before Covid-19 mandated the elimination of face-to-face interactions.

Assignments within the courses also had a wide range of formats. In some courses there were research papers and formal presentations and reflective writings could take the form of essays, blog posts, or professional journals. Different disciplines had distinctive needs and content.

Criteria for grading included internship performance and supervisor evaluations, assignments, and course participation, but those could also vary based upon the department. The types of internships that students are able to pursue for course credit also varies—for example, internships pursued by students in the Department of Computer Science and Department of Engineering Technology are typically well-paid with hourly wages; in contrast, in the English Department many students find themselves working for literary journals or nonprofit organizations that do not incorporate paid internships into organizational budgets. At the same time, there are internships within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, such as the global internship opportunities available to language students in Europe that do provide compensation and also must consider the costs associated with working abroad. This diversity of internship experiences—locations, organizations, and structures—led our FLC to recognize that internships compensate our students in different ways with diverse currencies for a range of short- and long-term purposes. We also concluded that each format had advantages and disadvantages, limitations and possibilities. Through the FLC, we found that as internship coordinators and course instructors were could be more innovative and better prepared for our work with interns when we seek to understand the wide range of possibilities—and then assess and adapt what works best for our students in line with pedagogical, programmatic, and academic goals and needs.

Where we found ourselves on common ground was in the recognition that internships are valuable experiences that can help students' careers, but we also noted that not all students—based upon their personal and financial commitments—can pursue internships, which can be problematic when university and colleges require internships in a degree program. Research such as the 2018 AACU project, *Fulfilling the American Dream, Liberal Education and the Future of Work* found that as high as 94% of employers surveyed were more likely to hire a college graduate with an internship on their resumes than one without this experience. The impact on the employment opportunities for students who pursue internships is also evident in studies by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) such as the 2017 report, "The Impact of Undergraduate Internships on Post-Graduate Outcomes for the Liberal Arts" where research revealed that "the strongest predictors of initial career outcomes were grade point average and the total number of internships a student completed" (4). NACE sees internships as "an integral part of an excellent undergraduate education . . . a pathway to career success for undergraduate students" (5). Statistics such as these have prompted more interest in internships by universities, students, and employers, yet as professors, we need to be cognizant of the challenges required experiential learning, particularly in the form of internships, can present.

Recognizing the rich learning opportunities that internships can provide, KSU is committed to growing internship course enrollments and expanding access to internships. The QEP affirms this and creates the parameters for student internship and co-op experiences:

> The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom.

1. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
2. The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
3. The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
4. There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic
coursework.
5. There is an assignment in which students reflect on their experience.
6. There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field
of the experience.
7. There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.
8. There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning.

In consideration of this criteria and a recognition of the FLC member shared commitment to mentoring, supporting, and teaching students who participate in college internships, we embarked on a journey where we confirmed the diversity of internships and related courses available to our students, but we concurred that there is a need for more resources and research about internship program design and development. Though experienced internship coordinators, we would benefit from more knowledge from others doing similar work.

Through discussion over the months of the FLC, we discussed resources that we could rely upon for our work with student interns. Each of had resources through scholarship within our disciplines regarding pedagogical structures and assignments, but we were seeking something more global. Resources from CETL for the FLC provided copies of Louis Menand's book referenced above, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in the American University* helped us understand the emergence of a pre-professional focus in higher education. In contrast, *Intern Nation: How to Learn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New World* by Ross Perlin also mentioned cited previously in this report was a cautionary tale about the ethical and legal considerations of student internships. These two texts, published in 2010 and 2012, respectively, were the leading resources available to us. We searched for textbooks and student resources, which led us to an expensive resource entitled *The Successful Internship*, but the publisher advised that it was not a good book for all internships, and they provided little response to requests for additional information.

Reviewing these texts brought many of the FLC leaders back into conversation with each other. We found that our own knowledge and experience might be what was most valuable. One of our members, an engineering professor reminded us that former students enrolled in our courses may be our greatest resource—we could and should consider the feedback we received in teaching evaluations, yet additional inquiries about their experiences as interns would be helpful too. We spent much of our time together discussing our class structures, the types of internships our students pursued, the partnerships we procured, and the resources we found

useful. From these conversations we learned that the work of internship coordinators and course instructors is very demanding—many moving pieces, many stakeholders, and many situations that need individualized attention. This often results in limited time for scholarship and connecting with others about this work.

Within the KSU community, our primary resources about internships comes from CETL and the Department of Career Planning and Development. In Spring 2020, CETL held an "It's About Engagement" workshop about internships. Led by the QEP Steering Committee member from the Department of Career Planning & Development, this workshop invited members from our FLC to join her in the program and shared materials such as syllabi and assignment summaries from our courses. The Department of Career Planning & Development are also essential partners as it is through the Handshake system and Career & Internship events that our students often find internships and are able to register for our courses. One of the more significant sessions of the FLC was a conversation with leaders from this department to gain a better understanding of their goals and resources as well as the QEP components.

In addition, CETL has supported efforts at both the university and the college levels, such as the CHSS workshop in Summer 2020, where reflective writing and metacognition was the focus. Here again, we had FLC members both participating and sharing materials they use. Notably, in Summer 2020, CHSS also built a team of faculty to explore HIPs through a significant AACU intensive program—members of our FLC were involved. Coming out of the program, the college hosted a meeting for all internship coordinators in CHSS and also invited one of our FLC members from the College of Computer Science to share her innovative networking events that bring employers and students together. In addition, the taxonomies and reflective assessment materials on the KSU QEP webpages provided additional resources for our FLC members as well as other faculty across the university. FLC members seized the opportunities to learn more and share ideas with each other to improve our programs and courses in formal group sessions and less formal advice-seeking conversations.

Conclusion

It cannot be overstated that the timing of the FLC revealed the strengths and weaknesses of college internship programs, including our own. In February 2020, Global Workplace Analytics reported that 3.6% of US workers performed their jobs from home (a growth of 173% since 2005); by December 2020 the number is expected to reach at least 30% (Lister 1). With current economic and public health challenges, employers will add more remote internships. We were learning this in "real time": as KSU and universities across the country moved students from campus to remote and online learning, the US workforce was also shutting down. In the month of April alone, unemployment was sky rocking—nearly 23.1 million Americans were now unemployed. While there has been some recovery, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics in September 2020, the unemployment rate is still over 10% across the country. This impacts internship programs as we have to consider the safety and well-being our students, the ethics of interns replacing furloughed employees, and the economic needs of families and internship providers.

At this juncture FLC members face a range of critical questions: How can we create viable, ethical work-based experiences for our students in this time? What kinds of mentoring and support will enable our students to pursue much-needed professional opportunities within the limitations of a public health crisis? Will internships look different in the future—more remote work and virtual interactions? How do we as faculty members collect the needed information to prepare our students and shape college support systems that can maximize the learning that comes through internships? And, what do our classes need to look like, our assignments need to focus on, our learning outcomes need to reflect? These are but a handful of questions that are shaping our conversations and work at this time. Students are moving home or sheltering in place. Travel is significantly limited—particularly outside of the US. Even established work-based learning programs, such as student teaching in education programs, are even left struggling how to adapt. These questions are crafting new research questions and opportunities for scholarship. As our FLC focuses on serving current student, university, and public needs, we find ourselves seeing the value of our work in new ways and believe it will yield a host of resources because of the time we interacted and learned from each other. Projects are emerging that embrace cross-disciplinary distinctions and value the deep knowledge colleagues at KSU possess and can share with others here in our campus community and beyond.

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