

# Experiential Education Newsletter



Fall 2011

## Internship: More than just credits

Student Edition

*If someone gave you the chance to learn more about your field of study without sitting in a classroom, would you take it?*

This semester 152 students took that chance with an academic internship. These numbers have dropped from Fall 2010 where 157 students took part in the program. While most students are staying local and completing internships around the area, some have decided to leave and explore other places for their potential careers. Whether you want to stay close to home or get away, there are always opportunities waiting

for students.

There are various places in which an student can choose for an academic internship. Some are for a specific major. These include museums, science labs as well as television stations like VH1 and MTV. Other sites like Disney World and even Great Escape have internships that can go towards more than one major.

So whatever your major is or whatever you are thinking about doing as a profession, an academic internship is a great way to get the upper hand on other people who may be trying to get the same job.

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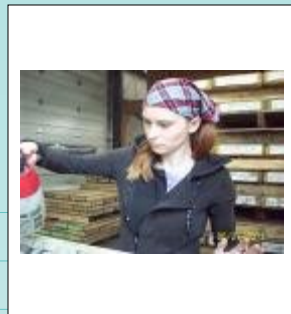


**“If the goal of working is getting paid for doing something that you love, why not try it out first and see if you really do love it.”**

That is what senior Stephanie Fochtman did when she took an internship over the summer for her Geology major. The internship took her to Alaska. “It is as different as writing an essay at a party while rolling on the floor and being at work with a professional mindset”, says Stephanie when asked about the difference between being in Potsdam and going to Alaska to work at Hecla Greens Creek Mining Company.

In her situation, Stephanie adapted to the long hours, which in her case was a 13 hour work day. In addition, she had to get used to the new faster pace that she had to work at. Responsibility is a concept that is really enforced when you are out in the field. “It’s not like in a classroom where if you get a bad grade, it’s not that bad. Out in the field, if you mess up not only do people know whose mistake it was, but it can cost everyone that you are working with”.

There are things that are learned out in the field that can’t be learned in the classroom. For example Stephanie learned, “geology is not an exact science. It’s all about interpretations”. Students get hands-on experience and witness things and situation that they would not see if they were to sit and listen to a lecture. Interns out in the field have the ability to apply what they have learned in class to their jobs. Overall, internships can “help you decide if you really want to do the job you think”. Stephanie admits. “I realized that it [mining] may be a lot of work, but I would mind it.”



**Student Highlight:  
Stephanie Fochtman**

## Faculty Highlight: Dr. Hersker

**“Finding out what you don’t want to do is just as important as find out what you want to do”**

This is what Dr. Alan Hersker stated when asked about the benefits of an academic internship. Being an anthropology professor, he teaches a class called Applied Anthropology, which helps students prepare for the next step in their career which is getting ready to go out into the real world. “With the way the economy is, there is a competition for not only jobs in the workforce, but graduate school. Nowadays, employers are looking for more than just a good GPA, you have to demonstrate that you can do more than sit in a classroom, you also have to have the ability to work in the real world.” This is where an internship would come in. With most of the jobs out there dealing with working with others, “internships can work on collaboration skills with others”, Hersker stated based not only his own experience, but the evaluations that he received from students that he sponsored.

“Internships allow to students to learn what they can’t be taught in a classroom by their professors.” This concept is put into motion in the anthropology department with the Applied Anthropology class which gives a student the opportunity to do their own research. It consists of 4 classes that lead up to an internship. Its goal is “to provide real world recommendations”. It demonstrates that students can work in the real world as well as by themselves. “I believe the two most important things about completing an internship are preparing for the next step and making long-term connections.”



## Site highlight: Rose Hill

Since 1997, over 27 SUNY Potsdam students have completed an academic internship at Rose Hill in Massena. In an interview with Tina Buckley, director of Rose Hill, "Great working relationship with the Experiential Education office at SUNY Potsdam. They are always willing to try new ideas and are completing assessments each semester to improve the Internship Program here at Rose Hill.

This center aids youth whose dependency on drugs and/or alcohol have caused their lives to become unruly. Some of the advantages of carrying out an academic internship at this location are, students learn how to work in a professional environment. They have the opportunity to participate in level advancement meetings and professional staff meetings. In this facility, students are not the only ones who benefit from an internship. Rose Hill gains a new set of eyes into the program giving them a "Fresh Perspective" as well as the arrival of new ideas, energy, excitement and enthusiasm.



# A Message from Service Learning

**Service-Learning News:** SUNY Potsdam continues to offer a wide array of service-learning courses providing students with hands-on, community-based experiences that illuminate the classroom curriculum.

Last year students took part in courses from eleven disciplines with service-learning projects ranging from trail work and back-country rescue training to mentoring local K-12 youth to working with a wide range of non-profits addressing everything from aging to sexual orientation, hunger, the environment and more. Here are a few examples:

Jay Pecora's Applied Theatre class performed "Forum Theatre" with SUNY Potsdam students on the subject of ethnic discrimination.

Lora Lunt's Teaching ESL practicum matched students as conversation partners with international students and members of the community who need help with English as a second or foreign language.

Heather Sullivan-Catlin's Sociology of the Family students conducted a community drive to gather materials from the Renewal House Wish List (toiletries, clothing, gas and phone cards, children's activities, etc.) to provide items to women and children staying in the organization's safe house.

Jennifer Mitchell's COMP 401: Directed Writing class works on projects that include completing grant writing and research, designing brochures and learning more about the not-for-profit sector.

**Help Available for Faculty Seeking Assistance with Service-Learning Course Development:** Faculty interested in developing service-learning courses should contact the campus faculty liaison for service-learning, Heather Sullivan-Catlin (Department of Sociology, x2570 or [sullivha@potsdam.edu](mailto:sullivha@potsdam.edu)). Dr. Sullivan-Catlin has a variety of resources on service-learning curriculum development for many disciplines and is available for one-on-one consultations with individual faculty or for presentations to whole departments/programs. For more information on the campus criteria for designating courses as SL (service-learning) see the Office of Experiential Education website at [www.potsdam.edu/EEO](http://www.potsdam.edu/EEO)

# Thoughts from the Director of EEO, Toby White a.k.a. “The Internship Guy”

Walking around campus or perusing the Racquette, you might have seen the poster of the “Internship Guy”. I would like to provide some background on how the “Internship Guy” concept started. For years, I have heard faculty, staff and students make the following statements: “Have you seen the Internship Guy?” “Go over and see the Internship Guy”, “Hey, Internship Guy, can you help me with my résumé?” “the Internship Guy can help you find an Internship!” So, since so many people refer to me as the Internship Guy, I thought I would do a parody from Superman! In keeping with the Superman theme, here is what I came up with:

He’s faster than an Internship Search Engine!

He’s more powerful than a résumé action verb!

He’s able to leap Internship Obstacles (Student apathy, paid/unpaid internships, finding housing) in a single bound!

Look, out in the quad, it’s a faculty member, it’s an administrator, no it’s the “Internship Guy”!

Kidding aside, academic internships are an important part of an undergraduate’s “Handcrafted Education” here at SUNY Potsdam. The “Internship Guy” is here to assist each student in the internship search process!

Summer 2012 is just around the corner! Please stop in soon to start planning your academic internship!

## **Benefits: What’s in it for you?**

- ⇒ Raise your GPA
- ⇒ Articulate the field, learn the lingo
- ⇒ Relate course work to your field
- ⇒ In some cases, you can get paid
- ⇒ Possibility of graduating early
- ⇒ Helps create and build a career portfolio
- ⇒ Gives 2 recommendation letters
- ⇒ Network in the next job interview
- ⇒ Copies the “job search process”
- ⇒ A sure a way that know whether you are in the field you want to be in

## **Optimal Resume:**

- Enables students to create a resume online
- Creates career material based on career goals
- Students can create their own professional website to present materials (resumes, cover letters)
- Organizes everything you need in one place
- Has any letters that are needed for career hunting
- Plenty of samples for students to look at to get ideas

## **What’s new in BearTracker?**

*The well-known career and internship database BearTracker has some new “hunting skills” to help students find jobs as well as internships in any field that that you’re looking for.*

- Connected to other sites such as careerrookie.com, careerbuilder.com and JuJu.com
- Searches for paid and unpaid internships, summer jobs, full and part-time jobs as well as volunteer positions