Tips for Academic Internships

Developing Community Learning Agreements:

- **Community Learning Agreements (CLAs)**, while initiated by one faculty, **are with the UNIVERSITY**, not with an individual course or program or department. For example, the community partner may need someone in Design one semester and someone in Communications another semester. These are not _monogamous_ marriages between a community partner and a department or faculty.
- It is most efficient to develop internship agreements with agencies/organizations/corporations that **commit to hosting interns and working with the University over time**.
- It is inefficient (and unacceptable to Procurement and Contract Services) to develop CLAs with organizations if there is not an identified faculty interest in placing students with the org.
- ONLY when a student participates in a paid internship as **an employee of that organization is a CLA not required** (because the student benefits from employee protections). Even in this case, the faculty must determine that the place of employment offers an _appropriate learning experience_ for the student to warrant university credit. Note: Some departments do not allow this, and others encourage it.
- There is no work-around based on the students' internship being remote/virtual. Even **remote/virtual internships need to go through the same process of getting a CL Agreement with the organization**.

Role of the Supervising Faculty Member

- While this varies widely from department to department, ideally faculty are meeting with the student throughout the internship and the faculty member is there to support, troubleshoot, advise, and guide the student's reflections of their experience.
- Experiential learning has all the dynamics of both a work environment and a learning environment. The arrangement can be challenging in terms of expectations on all sides (faculty, student, organization), and logistical, practical, and ethical issues can arise, which assigned faculty should address.
- We expect faculty to view the Community Partner site supervisor as a co-educator and therefore be responsible for initiating and responding to communication with the site supervisor.

Departmental Supports

In departments where an internship is required for a major, one helpful approach is to **create a block schedule** so that students have certain days of the week they know they will complete their internships.

Internship Equity

The Community Engagement Center, Career Center, and others are committed to finding/securing funding (as stipends and employment) for internships. This is an equity issue that has been identified, and must be recognized, and addressed at all levels.