Fall Edition of the MC-ICE Courier:

- Carol Quandt Essay Winner
- Don Hunt Award Winner

MC-ICE June Meeting Overview

Check the next pages for the tentative program for the MCEIA Conference in Detroit in October. You won't want to miss it!

Support MC-ICE

Come to Detroit in October!!

A Gathering of Great Minds

MCEIA Conference 2008

DETOIT
Message from the President

I am so happy to be stepping back into this role again. It is hard to believe that I was the chair in 2003 when the MCEIA conference was last hosted by Michigan. Well I am back in the position and MCEIA is back in Michigan.

We are hosting the conference this year to help celebrate Michigan Council’s 25th anniversary. The conference will be in Detroit this October 26-28 at the Atheneum Hotel. It will be a great conference and hope you all plan to attend.

We have done so many wonderful things over the years through MC-ICE and have seen many changes. One thing that has not changed is the importance of our work with cooperative education and internships. We continue to promote cooperative education and internships to our students to help prepare them for the job market and to our employers to train future talent and provide for their economic future. I look forward to continuing this commitment as an organization.

I would like to extend a sincere thanks to Bob Penkala for doing a great job as the MC-ICE chair last year. I would also like to thank the members of the Executive Committee for their dedication and support. Thank you to Darren Heartwell who served as Recording Secretary for two years. A special thanks to Nancy Stupsker and Diane Grimord for their many years of continuous service as Treasurer and Corresponding Secretary. We are happy to welcome our newest board member, Brian Partie. I would also like to thank those of you for your participation in board meetings and encourage you all to come and check them out. It is a great way to support your profession.

The meeting schedule this year is as follows:
October 2, 2008 - Kettering University
November 19, 2008
February 17, 2009
April 16, 2009
July 16, 2009

Hope to see you at the events and meetings this year!

Lisa Phillips
2008-2009 MC-ICE President

Keep an eye out throughout this edition for pictures of the Co-op Challenge!!!
October 26, 2008 - Sunday

12:00pm – 7:00pm Conference Registration
10:00am – 1:00pm New Board of Governors Meeting
12:00pm – 7:00pm Exhibitors

1:00pm – 4:00pm Pre-Conference Workshop
“Nuts & Bolts of Co-op”
Facilitators: Bob Penkala and Nancy Stupsker

Is it "all greek to you"? If you are new to the world of co-op and internship, this session will focus on elements that allow you to structure a work integrated learning program and assure a valuable co-op or internship experience for your students. The first part of the presentation deals with elements of program structure and its relationship to the organization. The role of the practitioner will be discussed as well as that of the student. Employer development, records maintenance, placement, monitoring and evaluation techniques will be explored as well.

4:00pm – 5:15pm State Director's Meeting
5:30pm – 6:30pm New Comers Special Welcome
8:30pm – 10:00pm Welcome Reception - Toga/Toga (Toga's and sandals requested) Desserts and cordials Hosted by Conference Committee

October 27, 2008 – Monday

7:00am – 1 pm: Registration
8:30am – 4:30pm Exhibitors

8:30am – 9:00am Continental Breakfast
9:00am – 9:15am Detroit & Conference Welcome, MCEIA President

9:15am – 10:15am “Internship 201: Hiring Interns and Co-op Students” Facilitated by Patti Jones, Director of the Regional College Talent Retention Initiative, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce

This session, planned in partnership with the **Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce**, will focus on why and how: Why employers benefit from internship/co-op hires and how to operate a successful program. The panel consists of employers and students who will share best practices.

10:30am – 11:30am Networking Exchange: Generating Great Connections between Employers and Educators. MCEIA Educators and employers will have an opportunity to mix and meet with the Detroit Regional Chamber guests. School representatives: please bring materials to share.

12:00pm - 1:30pm Awards Luncheon
1:45pm -2:45 pm Concurrent sessions:

**Session 1: Implementing Best Practices to Become an Employer or Employee of Choice**
Facilitated by: Donna Kutlowski Ski-squared Communications, LLC
Session participants will learn how to implement strategies for orienting and motivating incoming intern and co-op hires to new standards and preparing them to learn what traits and best behaviors will allow them to put their best foot forward in the limited time frame of an internship or co-op session. Topics such as helping interns learn how to recognize, adopt and implement “best behaviors” that will bolster leadership traits and transition themselves from a temporary employee to a valued producer will be explored. Employers will be given strategies that propel them from an employer to an employer of choice, through orientations that foster rich relationships with new co-op and hires and let them know how they can work toward becoming an employee of choice within the limited time frame of an internship or co-op experience.

Session 2: Not Your Typical Internship- An Employer's Perspective
Karla McLaughlin, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis

Take a peek into the window of an employer's internship program. Do you really know what happens to your students when they leave campus and begin their internship? Join us in this interactive session to discuss and learn what our interns experience when they choose to intern with The Children's Museum of Indianapolis. Through the combination of mentoring and professional development workshops, students gain valuable insights about themselves and their professional world.

Session 3: An Integrative study of Internships and Career Services
Kerry Thompson, University of Michigan, Dearborn

This session discusses a study that evaluates the perspectives of all stakeholders – students, employers and schools – and helps establish a framework ensuring a meaningful internship experience. Methods to maximize benefits to all parties: schools increase participation rates, students receive quality work experiences and employers have improved access to better prepared graduates, will be discussed as well as best practices, organizational structure, assessment of technological trends and how to enhance the value of the experiential learning process.

Session 4: Butler University's College of Business, Professional and Career Development 4 year plan
Karel Updyke, Butler University Director of Undergraduate Programs for the College of Business, and May Ellen Wolfsie, Director of Career Development Services within the College of Business

This session will outline the 4 year Career development plan utilized by Butler University to assist students in preparation for their required internships. Results of this program will be discussed in terms of students' career preparation before and after the implementation of this program. In addition, a brief outline for the process used to assist students to secure their internships and complete the academic portion of their internships will be presented.

2:45pm – 3:00pm. Break
3:00pm – 4pm Concurrent Sessions:

Session 1: Cool co-ops Competition: Cultivating Collective Value
Zach Osborne, Assistant Professor/Michelle Clare, University of Cincinnati

By way of thorough explanation and exploration of the University of Cincinnati's Cool Co-ops Competition, participants will learn about a myriad of benefits (expected and unexpected) for students, employers, co-op/internship programs and universities as well as the challenges and issues that have surfaced throughout the Competition's two-year run. Participants will walk away with specific information about how they might implement the program at their own institution.

Session 2: A Bright Future: Succession Planning and Trainees
Nicole O'Brien and Timothy Gabrish General Services Association/Great Lake Region

As a government agency with a large population of eligible retirees, we will share what it takes to get an internship and/or job with a government agency as well as what characteristics we look for in our trainee hires. We will provide an overview of what we have learned about the value of hiring and retraining trainee and entry level hires to meet our agency's succession planning needs.

Session 3: The Meaning of Cooperative Education through the voices of college students: Toward a Grounded Theory
Facilitator: Amy J. Lane, M.S. ABD
Session 3: Orientation to Cooperative Education
Facilitator: Terry Rydberg, Waukesha County Technical College

This session explores a 2 day workshop offered by the Graphics Department at Waukesha County Technical College that was developed as a pilot program for students in the graphics Design and printing programs. Based on the success achieved by the students in the program and on feedback from hiring employers, this model program has now been replicated in two separate divisions at WCTC. Participants at this session will understand why the Orientation has been successful, how students and employers perceive the value of the Orientation and how other practitioners can replicate the experiences on their campuses.

12:30 pm – 1:30pm  Business Luncheon
1:30 pm – 2:00pm  Transportation to Detroit Institute of Arts

2:00pm – 3:00pm  The Art of Work

Experience the Detroit Industry Fresco, created on the walls of the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) by internationally recognized artist, Diego Rivera. The Detroit Industry Fresco, may be one of Diego's most well known works of art. Through the eyes of the artist you will learn how he depicts the manufacturing industry and tells its story. DIA Director of Education, Nancy Jones, will explore Diego's Fresco and challenge us to think about how society views the role work plays in the world. The "art of this work" offers insights we can use as we prepare students to explore and experience their entry into the world of work through their co-op or internship experiences.

6:00pm - 6:30pm  Reception
6:30 pm– 9:00pm  Gather for Greatness Celebration and Banquet

Presentation of
E. Sam Sovilla Educator of the Year
Employer of the Year Award
Don Hunt Lifetime Achievement Award

9:30pm  Evening Entertainment in the City

October 29, 2008 - Wednesday

10:00am – 11:30am  Conference Committee Debrief

MI-ICE and MC-ACE Joint Conference

Put this date on your calendars - June 4-5, 2009
The Inn at Bay Harbor
www.innatbayharbor.com

Co-chairs Kristy McDonald  kmcdonald@nmc.edu
Brian Partie, Jr  brian.j.partie@cmich.edu
Higher education institutions need to broaden their understanding of the depth of meaning cooperative education/internship experiences have for students rather than focus only on numbers of students. Because cooperative education/internship experiences are required for many majors in higher education and rely on out-of-classroom experiences, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Administrators have an interest in the meaning students make of these experiences. This study looks at the meaning-making of college students and how they make sense of their knowledge, experience, and relationships after returning from their summer co-op/internship experience. The role of co-op/internship will be explored in terms of college student development and enhancement of the learning experience during college.

October 28, 2008 - Tuesday

7:30am – 12 pm Registration
7:30am – 9:00am Continental Breakfast
9:00am – 10:30am Exhibitors
9am – 10:30am Keynote Presentation

**Different People Different Styles**
Elaine Torossian  
Sr. Leadership Development Specialist Beaumont University-Beaumont Hospitals

Improve your communication skills, increase your understanding, or just learn a little more about yourself and others. During this interactive presentation, participants will gain insights into their own communication style as well as the styles of others through the use of the American Management Association's Social Style Instrument: "People's Styles at Work".

At the conclusion of this course participants will be able to:

- Identify the strengths of their personal style and recognize that overuse of strengths for that style can lead to perceived weaknesses.
- Assess what actions are required for growth in their style.
- Recognize how their style is perceived by others, both positively and negatively.
- Identify strategies to adapt their style to other styles in order to make the most of the interaction.

10:30am – 11:00am Break
11:00am – 12:15pm Concurrent Sessions

**Session 1: Different People Different Styles: Interactive breakout session**
This session will be a follow up to the Keynote, providing activities and strategies that can be employed to foster stronger working relationships between colleagues, employers and employees and deal effectively with stress in the workplace.

**Session 2: The Five W's of a CAS Internship Program Self Study**
Facilitator: Jean Spahr College of DuPage

If you are thinking of a program self-study, but don't know where to start, this session is for you. We will cover the basics of conducting an internship or co-op program self-study using the study guide approved by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. We will discuss the "why, where, when, who and what" involved, as well as "how" to go about the self-study process. Equally important, we will consider the impact and utility of the undertaking.
Statewide Internship Initiative from the Detroit Regional Chamber

In Michigan, as in many other areas of the country, talent retention is an issue of great concern. As one well-respected think tank succinctly stated the problem: if we don’t get younger and better educated as a state, we will continue to get poorer.

Graduating college students report that they believe there aren’t good jobs in Michigan. At the same time, employers complain they can’t find enough qualified talent. This disconnect must be addressed for the sake of the economic and workforce needs of the State.

A statewide survey of students graduating in April 2007 showed that while 88% came from Michigan, 46% left the state after graduation. Furthermore, as baby boomers retire the workforce will have more jobs than qualified candidates. At the same time, the high school graduating classes will shrink. This simple demographic formula will cause labor shortages among degreed professionals in the coming years. Left unaddressed, this loss of degreed young professions will continue to adversely impact the economy.

Internship is one strategy that will address the retention of college graduates with Michigan employers. Paired with significant efforts to draw attention to the aspects of the community that are attractive to young professionals, it will result in a higher percentage of college educated citizens in the State.

The Detroit Regional Chamber has a plan that will, over 3-5 years, result in 25,000 internships/co-ops for students with 7500 employers. While it isn’t possible to assess how many interns and co-ops there are now, it’s assumed that the current level will be doubled.

These are the key aspects of the internship initiative:

- A web portal is being designed for employers to post an internship position ONCE and it will be funneled to the appropriate school representatives throughout the state. This will require that career services and internship/co-op offices become partners in this system. We are exploring ways to integrate the databases currently in use at the schools so that employers are not asked to re-enter job posting information into individual school systems. The web portal will be launched in the fall.

- This initiative will require participation from the colleges and universities throughout the state. So far, we have agreement from the 15 public universities to support this initiative and the independent colleges are also interested in participating.

- The web portal will also allow employers to post their opportunities for students directly and students will be able to apply to positions in this system.

- Opportunities with a high likelihood of resulting in regular employment upon graduation will be the primary target for this internship initiative. Paid internships will be encouraged, although unpaid internships will also be part of this system.

- A large marketing campaign will begin so that employers will 1.) learn the benefits of hiring interns as a
recruitment strategy, 2.) use the web portal to post their opportunities.

- Employer forums will be held regularly and an employer toolkit will be available to introduce the benefits and how-to’s of hiring interns/co-ops.

- Campus Marketing interns will be hired at individual campuses but reporting to the DRC program director. We are seeking funding for this to be a paid internship in which students promote employers’ offerings to students and encourage growth in the number of students seeking internship/co-op.

- An advisory board has been convened and is chaired by Jerry Mollien, Vice President, Masco Corporation. The board includes employers, schools, business associations, young professionals groups, community agencies, and students.

- The current funding is from a Department of Labor WIRED grant (Workforce Innovation through Regional Economic Development). Additional funders have shown interest in the project and will be tapped in the coming weeks.

- This will be a statewide initiative. DRC will market it in southeast Michigan, and other WIRED-funded agencies will market it in mid-Michigan and west-Michigan. Also, the system will be used and marketed by business associations throughout the state for their members.

If you have questions, concerns, great thoughts, please call Patti Jones at the Detroit Regional Chamber at 313.596.0432.
Donations Needed!!!

If you would be interested in donating one or more items for door prizes for the 2008 Midwest Cooperative Education and Internship Association (MCEIA) Conference, to be held at the Atheneum Suites Hotel in Detroit, October 26 to 28, 2008, it would be very much appreciated.

Please either send your donations to me by Wednesday, October 22, 2008, or bring them to the conference.

This will be the first time in 34 years that the regional conference will be held in the City of Detroit. We are very anxious to show our guests a memorable time, showcasing the D in the most welcoming light.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

If you would like more information about the conference, please visit www.mceia.org.

We hope to see you there!

Best regards,

Diane Grimord
Cooperative Education Program
Career Services
1001 F/AB
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI 48202
313-577-3390
313-577-7791 (Direct)

American Society for Engineering Education - Cooperative Education Division

We are eager to announce that the abstract submission phase for the 2009 Annual Conference and Exposition being held in Austin, TX on June 14-17, 2009 is now open! Information such as the Author's Kit, Division Social Event & Business Meeting Policies and Event Details, Distinguished Lecture Nomination and Sunday Workshop to requesting events as well as submitting abstracts/papers.

Application forms are posted on our website at http://www.asce.org/conferences/annual/2009/Call-for-Papers.cfm as well as in SmoothPaper (www.asce.org/smoothpaper). Each document will consist of important information with deadline dates pertaining
Kettering University names Frank Hribar

Frank Hribar is the new vice president for Enrollment Services at Kettering University. His first day was July 21. “I am pleased to join the team here at Kettering at a time when the University’s momentum is making a difference in the state’s economic redevelopment,” Hribar said.

Hribar comes to Kettering from Siena Heights University in Adrian, Mich., where he was the vice president for Enrollment Management. He has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a master's degree in Human Resource Development from Siena Heights. Frank is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Benedictine University in Illinois in higher education and organizational development.

Internship & Co-op Challenge 2008

We had a great turnout for another wonderful event hosted at Kettering University Friday July 25th. The weather was perfect and the teams performed at their peak. Events included: sand volleyball, punt/pass/kick, whiffleball derby, trivia challenge, problem solving, put-out and a skit. The theme this year honored the Olympics. The participants wore t-shirts stating “Let the Games Begin” and the theme of the skit was “Going for the Gold at Your Co-op/Intern.” The winner of the event this year was Peter Basso & Associates. This was a big win for them since this year was their third appearance at the event.

They were very proud to take the trophy and look forward to defending their title next year.

We hope to see you next year.
Lisa Phillips and David Thomas

Co-op/Intern Finder Now Available

The MC-ICE website allows you to search for co-op and intern contacts. The system provides the ability for you to search for schools that have programs in the major you are seeking. Be sure to check it out at www.mc-ice.org.

Question????

Does anyone out there have documentation on employers' conversion rates; that is, the percentage of co-op/intern students who become regular employees upon graduation? Whether it's from a school's program, or a particular employee, or an entire industry, I would like to see those data.

Patti Jones pdjones@umd.umich.edu
Hello MC-ICE Members:

From the CEIA Region 4 Midwest VP)

> The CEIA Board of Directors Meeting

On July 17-18, 2008 the CEIA Board of Directors met in Portland, Oregon to continue working towards accomplishing the CEIA Strategic Planning Goals and Objectives. These include a special focus on Marketing, Communications, Web Development and Professional Development. You may visit the website for more details about these meetings at http://ceiainc.org

- A Blog has been developed for young professionals www.ceiabuzz.blogspot.com
- Honorary Lifetime CEIA Memberships will be submitted for Al Foderaro and Kimberly Ware
- The RFP deadline for the new Web ReDesign was August 4, 2008
- New "Join CEIA Brochure: (electronic version for all members to use with benefits for joining) "Why Join CEIA Co-op/Internship Video", ideas to promote membership were discussed and are being researched.
- Investigating webinars for employers from Fortune Magazine's Corporate University Exchange.

> 2009 CEIA Annual Conference

The 2009 CEIA Annual Conference will be held in Portland, Oregon, April 19-22, 2009 at the Portland Hilton & Executive Tower. You will find more detailed information in the months to come at http://ceiainc.org/Conference/

> Research Grants

If you are interested in doing research of the professional and would like to apply for funding please see more detailed information at http://ceiainc.org/publications/r_awards.htm There were 16 grant applications and three were selected for a total of $8000 in research grants for 2008-09. Findings of this research will be published in the Journal and be presented at the Annual Conference.

> CEIA Board of Director Members from the Midwest

Region 4 continues to hold several positions on CEIA Board of Directors, R. Penkala, J. Spahr, D. Cayse, P. Harrier, P. Jones, A. Todd and P. Gardner, details at http://ceiainc.org/about/board.htm

> CEIA National Academy of Work Integrated Learning (NAWIL)

Remember to check out the National Academy Sessions that are offered throughout the year in various locations of the country. More information about NAWIL can be found at http://ceiainc.org/training/activities.htm

> Become Involved in CEIA

You may also check out the CEIA Website and see more about how you can become involved: http://ceiainc.org/

> CEIA Calendar of Events

Please check out the CEIA Calendar of events as your state meetings and drive-in workshops as well as the MCEIA regional conferences have been added to reach a broader audience. http://www.ceiainc.org/upgrades/ViewCurrentEvents.aspx
Please Consider and Nominate Potential “Cooperative Education Hall of Honor” Candidates

The Midwest Region must review regional leaders in experiential learning for nomination into the Hall of Honor. Please consider organizations or individuals and nominate them. How about your regional and state organizations? The following link provides all information pertaining to the award and the nomination process. http://www.uc.edu/propractice/hallofhonor/nominations.htm

Please contact me if you have questions or information you would like me to share with the CEIA Board on behalf of your school, State or Region 4.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Bob Penkala
penkalar@macomb.edu

Students in Free Enterprise Complete First Entrepreneurship Academy
Mike Callahan - Director, Career Planning & Development / School of Management / The University of Michigan - Dearborn

The E-Academy was developed by Students in Free Enterprise at The University of Michigan-Dearborn along with the help of various faculty advisors and business leaders. It is a newly developed competition which brings local area high school students together to learn about entrepreneurship, as well as teamwork, and financial literacy. These students have the opportunity to compete for various scholarships through the development and presentation of a business plan. This year’s participants included Edsel Ford High School, Cass Technical High School, Woodhaven High School, Thurston High School, Lincoln Park High School, and Stevenson High School with a total of 17 students dedicating their time and effort to the competition. The high school students had the chance to experience a college environment and receive guidance from Students in Free Enterprise, along with critical insight from successful business owners and School of Management faculty. The competition took two weeks to complete and included numerous workshops, a networking dinner, and an awards banquet where $10,400 worth of scholarship prizes was given away.

Final Results:
First Place: Edsel Ford High School: Ahmed Alawadi, Katie Jesulaitis, Noman Anwar
Second Place: Cass Technical High School: Jelisa Morris, Stanley Tucker
Third Place: Woodhaven High School: Brooklyn Yanos, Erin Decker, Kayla Baker
Honorable Mention: Thurston High School: Arthur Andrews II, Deon Freeman, Ryan Johnson
Also competing:
Lincoln Park High School: Annette Gueits-Gonzales, Elisa Ybarra, Stephanie Arispe.
Stevenson High School: Ashlee Maciejewski, Jacob Wilson, Samantha Jackson.
New engineering endowed chair helps Michigan industry
Aug 01, 2008

Grand Valley State University’s School of Engineering has long had a special focus on preparing undergraduates to work in Michigan’s important industrial sector. Now, the school is making some moves to improve that preparation.

The university has named Chris Plouff as its new James R. Sebastian Endowed Chair in Engineering Cooperative Education and Educational Development. In that role, Plouff will collect baseline data on programs and try to improve them to better serve both students and industry. Plouff previously was director of Career Services at Grand Valley. He has an engineering background and will teach classes as well as help develop curriculum.

“We wanted to bring in somebody who can enhance the quality of the engineering education process. Chris possesses two important qualities — a background in engineering and experience placing students in the workplace,” said Paul Plotkowski, dean of the Seymour and Esther Padnos College of Engineering and Computing at Grand Valley. “His impact will extend far beyond curriculum. The results of his work will influence how competitive and innovative our engineers are, and that affects how manufacturers succeed.”

Plouff said he is “dedicated to helping improve the courses and curriculum and making them responsive to the needs of both students and local industry. In order to have continuous improvement, we need to measure student learning outcomes and assess them against both internal and external goals and standards. I’m looking forward to using those measurements to help foster curricular innovation.”

The Sebastian Chair is Grand Valley’s third fully endowed chair. It is named for James R. Sebastian, Sr., founder of Rapistan, a manufacturer of conveyor belt and materials handling systems that is now owned by Dematic, a multinational company. Plotkowski called Sebastian the “father of engineering at Grand Valley.”

“James Sebastian led the effort to introduce engineering at Grand Valley in the 1980s — and with an experiential cooperative component. Only a handful of programs in the country have cooperative real-world experience that is integrated and mandatory, and even fewer did so when Grand Valley’s program was founded. In that sense, he was a real visionary,” Plotkowski said.

The chair was funded by a long-term gift from James R. and Audrey M. Sebastian that has now matured. Endowed chairs at Grand Valley are established at a minimum level of $1.5 million.

“Our Dad was very committed to entrepreneurship, to engineering, and to the growth of our region,” said David Sebastian, executive director of the Sebastian Foundation. “He was keen on the need for engineering education to have a practical component and be grounded by the realities of manufacturing. He knew that this would yield engineers who would be both creative and results-oriented.”

Plouff’s new position is one of several changes announced in the engineering program. Charlie Standridge is the new assistant dean of the Padnos College of Engineering and Computing, and Toma Hentea is the new director of the School of Engineering.

Plouff, Standridge and Hentea will be present at the School of Engineering's Senior Design Conference on Friday, August 1 from 1-5 p.m. in the Keller Engineering Laboratories Building in downtown Grand Rapids. On display will be projects with a combined materials value exceeding $160,500. The conference celebrates the successful completion of the Capstone Design Program, in which teams of senior engineering students solve real-world engineering design problems sponsored by participating industries and other sponsoring organizations. The projects take two semesters to complete, and at the end the companies who participate have an actual working product. This event is filled with compelling visuals and is open to media coverage.

The day culminates in the Order of the Engineer ceremony, which is a special commencement ritual for Engineering students. The graduates earn their degrees later in the year than the traditional spring ceremony because they must complete a year-long co-op experience. In the ceremony, each student receives an iron ring, placed on the little finger of the working hand, which symbolizes bridging the step between training and experience.
Carol Quandt Essay Contest Winner - Amy Topolewski

(pictured below with her parents and Patti Jones)

In the introduction to *Working*, oral history of working life, Terkel interviewees he spoke with while the commonplace malaise of the He writes, “Nora Watson may have when she said, ‘I think most of us not a job. Most of us, like the as-jobs that are too small for our enough for people.’” Assuredly, many members of the work force who are dissatisfied with the jobs they once believed would be fulfilling. It gives a voice to those who dread getting up and going to a job every day that does little more for them than pay the bills.

Though one can in no way completely nullify the value of a job that “pays the bills,” there is much to be said for a job that, in some way, does more than just that...a job that fulfills more than just one’s financial needs. Like most of us, I have had my share of unfulfilling jobs. Through these jobs, however, at which the tasks I performed were often less than gratifying, I began to learn that job fulfillment does not stem solely from the tasks one completes. Through these various jobs, I learned the value of an encouraging employer, an employer who takes an interest in the work you do, however mundane and insignificant it may seem. Though the foundations of my beliefs regarding job fulfillment were laid during my high school career and my first year of college, these beliefs have solidified by my experience as an intern at a large, international marketing services company.

Through my affiliation with the Cooperative Education Program at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and specifically my placement as a corporate communications intern at Valassis Communications, I have gained a greater understanding of how tremendously an employer or supervisor can impact one’s work experience, as well as the fulfillment one finds in a particular position. I have come to learn first-hand that an employer truly has the power to help create a fulfilling work experience for an employee by providing honest, reassuring feedback, authoritative and reliable guidance, and a sense of openness and familiarity in the workplace.

Upon being offered the position I applied for at Valassis through my school’s co-op program, I was elated at the new and exciting prospect of becoming an intern. I came into the position with the expectation that it would be different than any job I had...
had previously, and this has proven to be true. My position as an intern has carried with it more challenging and rewarding responsibilities than any others I have had at previous jobs. Not only have my responsibilities increased, but they have also become more focused on my chosen field of study, which has given me the opportunity to apply things I’ve learned in class to my tasks at work. Being an intern has also introduced me to the corporate world and a professional office setting. Perhaps, however, the most significant characteristic of being an intern is the fulfillment I have found in my position. This fulfillment, though partially attributable to the responsibilities I have handled on a daily basis, stems primarily from the positive and informative feedback I have received on a daily basis, as well as the trust I have been awarded by my colleagues and supervisor.

From my very first day at Valassis, I knew that being an intern at the company was a great fit for me. My supervisor, who is also the director of the department of which I was a part and was, not surprisingly, extremely busy, spared no time in introducing herself to me. She warmly welcomed me and expressed a genuine interest in my being there. She conveyed her team’s excitement at hiring me as an intern, and I immediately felt at ease in her welcoming presence. Much to my surprise, she even referenced past jobs that I had had as indicated on my resume, though she herself did not interview me. She told me how these jobs, even a job as a receptionist at a salon, provided great experience that would service me in my new position. I can’t tell you how reassuring I found her words amid the anxiety of my first day. Even on my first day, having little idea of what my day-to-day tasks would entail, I knew that I would find satisfaction in the welcoming, encouraging nature of my supervisor.

Within my first week at Valassis, my supervisor also set aside time to meet with me one-on-one to give me a more detailed explanation of the position that I had been chosen to fill. She made expressly known to me the expectations that were in place for the position, and though this easily could have been a daunting experience, the manner in which she spoke to me was supportive and encouraging. Her honesty and straight-forwardness regarding what was expected of me, rather than scaring me off, gave me an even more ardent desire to perform to the very best of my abilities. She provided a broad overview of the company, the company’s recent history, and helped me to understand how the corporate communications department fit into the bigger picture. She made clear to me how the communications department as a whole, as well as my responsibilities within it, were significant and important for the success of the entire company. Perhaps one may think it an exaggeration that one intern’s actions can affect the well-being of the entire company, yet it is precisely this notion that reassured me that my job, however lowly some may perceive it to be, was indeed significant and worthwhile.

As time went by, I adjusted to my new environment and set of responsibilities. I was welcomed by others in the department and quickly came to play an active role within the team. I was pleasantly surprised the first time my supervisor called me “Am” rather than Amy. Though I am usually called “Am” only by family members, I soon grew accustomed to her use of this shortened version of my name. This is merely one testament to the open, familiar relationships I developed during my internship.

Ultimately, my experience as an intern thus far has taught me more than I could have expected. Though I had high expecta-
tions for the position, I could have in no way anticipated just how enriching an experience it would be. Perhaps one of the most im-
portant things I have gained from this experience has been a lesson in professionalism; through my internship I have learned what it
really means to act in a professional manner. Just through observing my supervisor and colleagues in various situations, I have de-
veloped a sense of professionalism I will carry with me wherever I go in the future. Through observing the manner in which my super-
visor approached different situations, acted under certain circumstances, and spoke to me and my colleagues, I have learned that be-
ing professional does not mean being stilted, unnatural, or unnecessarily formal. Rather, it means being genuine, honest, and straight-
forward, as my supervisor has always been with me. Employers and supervisors need merely to set an example of professionalism to
ensure that those below them, like interns, who are in learning to navigate the professional world, have a solid example of profes-
sionalism to refer to.

Not only have I gained a sense of professionalism that I will assuredly apply to future endeavors, but I have found my in-
ternship to be a fulfilling experience overall. The fulfillment I have found in my time at Valassis, as previously stated, can be attrib-
uted to the responsibilities that have been entrusted to me, as well as the positive, honest feedback and guidance I have received from
my supervisor and colleagues. While I have enjoyed the majority of the responsibilities I’ve been given in my position as an intern,
including multi-media writing and editing, there have, of course, also been the more mundane tasks that are liable to come with any
job, including mailings, filing, and organizing. However, whether I was writing or filing, editing or organizing, I was encouraged by
the positive feedback I received regardless of the task at hand; as I have learned, a simple “thank you” can make even the most mun-
dane task meaningful.

The familiar, open environment that my supervisor helped to create through her genuine and open demeanor, exemplified
by the time she took to meet with me throughout the course of my internship, as well as the fact that she quickly shortened Amy to
“Am,” has made me feel at home in a professional office setting that, prior to my internship, I was unfamiliar with. From this experi-
ence, I have learned a tremendous amount regarding how an employer has the power to create a fulfilling work experience, as my
supervisor has done for me; I have cemented my belief that job fulfillment stems not only from the tasks one completes on the job,
but more so from the type of feedback one receives and the relationships one builds. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to
work as an intern at Valassis for these reasons, and many more. Ultimately, I’ve found that while a job in and of itself cannot entirely
fulfill a person’s purpose in life, there are jobs out there that can satisfy more than just monetary needs. My experience as an intern
has given me hope that there are indeed jobs big enough to accommodate the human spirit. You sometimes just have to search a bit
harder to find them.
Employer of the Year

Dominos

Accepting for Dominos Jessica Rowland and Stephanie Hammond
With Bob Penkala

Don Hunt Award

Lisa Phillips