

UNPAID

Understanding
the Implications
of Internship
Compensation

Part I:
Student
Survey

Part II:
Alumni
Survey

Part III:
Qualitative
Data

Why Study
Unpaid
Internships?

*Andrew Crain
The Institute for Higher Education
The University of Georgia*

Criticisms of Unpaid Internships

"Colleges and universities have become cheerleaders and enablers of the unpaid internship boom, failing to inform young people of their rights or protect them from the miserly calculus of employers. In hundreds of interviews with interns over the past three years, I found dejected students resigned to working unpaid for summers, semesters and even entire academic years — and, increasingly, to paying for the privilege."

Ross Perlin, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/03/opinion/03perlin.html>

65%

of students
participate in an
internship

60%

of internships
are paid

56%

of students
completing an
internship have a
job offer



NACE Center for Career Development and Talent Acquisition
Call for Research (2015)

"...[While] past and ongoing research clearly supports the proposition that experiential education helps college graduates when they leave academia and enter the workforce there are nevertheless continuing questions about the **relationship between experiential education experiences and their impact on graduate career outcomes**. One of the most prominent of these questions involves whether there are differential consequences associated with whether or not the internship experience is a paid experience. NACE research has posited that...students seeking a full-time position with an unpaid internship experience in their background are **less likely to receive a job offer** than are students with a paid internship experience."

Project Overview

- **Part I: Examining Existing Internship Data at UGA**
- **Part II: Surveying Recent Grads and Connecting Their Responses to Outcomes Data**
- **Part III: Qualitative Interviews with Paid/Unpaid Internship Participants**

***Methodological Note: "Employment" in this study is defined as full-time work**

***Limitations**

Theoretical Framework



David Kolb

Experiential Learning

concrete experience, active experimentation, reflection, abstract conceptualization, connecting classroom to work



Albert Bandura

Self-Efficacy

ability to set and attain meaningful career goals



Donald Super

Career Self-Concept

career exploration, crystallization, and specification

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UGA's Part-Time Jobs and Internships Survey

- Examined survey results from Fall 2010 - Fall 2014
- 32% of internship participants were unpaid
- 85% of unpaid interns rated their experience as "Extremely Beneficial" or "Very Beneficial"
- Sampled 1,024 participants who reported an internship experience the year prior to graduation

2,800+

survey
participants
annually

22%

participants
reporting internship
experiences

Results

Statistically **LESS** likely to participate in unpaid internships:

- Men (8%)
- Minority students (9%)
- Students in higher percentile math scores on the SAT/ACT (0.4%)
- Transfer students (10%)

Median income (based on zip code) was borderline significant, suggesting more affluent students are less likely to participate in unpaid work

**Unpaid interns were
10% less likely to
select the top rating
for their experience
("Extremely Beneficial")**



Results (cont'd)



Students completing an unpaid internship the year prior to graduation were significantly more likely to report "**Still Seeking**" employment on the Career Outcomes Survey (63%)

Unpaid interns also earned an average of **\$7,000 less** after graduation - after controlling for race, gender, GPA, functional area and other factors

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Alumni Survey

Examined activities for recent graduates who completed the Career Outcomes Survey from 2013-2015

Respondents rated their involvement in a number of activities:

- Unpaid Internships
- Paid Internships
- Greek Life
- Professional or Social Organizations
- Part-Time Work (on and off campus)
- Study Abroad
- Intramurals

12,220
recent graduates
sampled

348
respondents

Discussion

Survey Design



Graduates were asked to provide detailed feedback on three key experiences:

- 645 total experiences were reported
- 103 paid internships, 101 unpaid internships

The following outcomes were explored using a 5-point Likert Scale:

- Goal-setting
 - Confirming or rejecting a field of interest
 - Professional skill development
 - Academic performance
 - Quality of supervision
 - Networking
 - Job search success
-
- Overall benefits and satisfaction with first job were also assessed

Results

More likely to pursue **UNPAID** internships:

- Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication
- College of Family & Consumer Sciences

Students in political science and international affairs also reported more intense engagement with unpaid internship work

More likely to pursue **PAID** internships:

- Men
- Business students
- Agriculture students

Unpaid internships remained correlated with delayed timelines to full-time employment - as well as being 11% less likely to express satisfaction with their first job after college

Results (cont'd)

Outcome Variable (Employment Time)

- **0** = Employed prior to graduation
- **3** = Employed 0-3 months after graduation
- **6** = Employed 3-6 months after graduation
- **9** = Employed 6-9 months or more after graduation

Campus Activities and Their Effect on Time to Full-Time Employment

Variable	Coeff.	Std. Error
No Internship	0.00660	(0.864)
Part-Time Work (On-Campus)	0.00941	(0.471)
Part-Time Work (Off-Campus)	0.958*	(0.471)
Unpaid Internship	1.244*	(0.597)
Paid Internship	0.534	(0.678)
Job Shadowing	0.267	(0.483)
Research	1.063*	(0.493)
Intramural Sports	-1.376**	(0.491)
Greek Life	-0.271	(0.518)
Community Service	-0.501	(0.762)
Community Service Organization	-0.809	(0.504)
Professional Organization	0.00624	(0.521)
Non-Greek Social Organization	0.117	(0.506)
Leadership Position(s)	-0.371	(0.573)
Study Abroad	0.962*	(0.472)
Service Learning	-0.650	(0.549)
Arts (Music, Theater, Dance, etc.)	-1.355	(0.980)
Field Experience	-1.120	(1.246)
Co-Op	-0.257	(1.253)
Constant	0.383	(1.312)
Observations	118	
R-squared	0.458	
Standard errors in parentheses		
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05		

Results (cont'd)

Salary Outcomes Relation to Campus Engagement

SAL	Coeff.	Std. Err.
PT_OFF	4124.938	2672.934
PT_ON	1382.76	2704.972
UNPAID	-2405.121	3374.957
PAID	3853.437	3218.867
SHADOW	-4177.24	5296.124
RESEARCH	4740.423	5010.776

Salary outcomes suggest a dual effect - declines related to unpaid internships and increases related to paid internships. The total range is a difference of over **\$6,250**.

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SHADOW	-4177.24	5296.124
RESEARCH	4740.423	5010.776
IMSPORTS	-4197.629	3626.527
GREEK	3425.993	3475.873
SERVICE	5481.746	3885.806
SERVICE_ORG	-5354.771	4310.413
PROF_ORG	3743.748	3462.912
NONGREEK_ORG	-164.9241	3732.647
LEADER	584.5336	3118.944
STUDY_ABD	5816.656*	2896.743
SERVICE_LRNG	-4059.55	3102.783
ARTS	-6807.874	6653.171
FIELD	-6432.909	7378.753
CO-OP	15294.13	8960.296
CAES	9403.546	6096.991
CENGR	5049.306	14636.76
CED	10797.81	12253.24
FACS	-1462.072	5715.191
PubHealth	-7402.859	12033.8
Franklin	-1565.198	3707.594
Grady	-557.767	4546.649
SPIA	2031.414	6087.043
Terry	10036.63*	4986.782
Warnell	-13289.11	8889.467
RACE	2068.747	3691.631
TRANSFER	3938.948	3947.855
MALE	6591.415*	3017.084
GPA	-1478.073	1436.3
Constant	30036.17	5687.317

Adj R-squared = 0.4539, n = 88, * p<0.05

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Qualitative Interview Highlights

Interviewed 6 recent grads who had completed **both** paid and unpaid internships

Conversations with students portray complex pathways through internships and other experiences on campus – these elements are difficult to isolate even on a single campus



Internships
as Cultural
Experiences

The
Injustice of
Unpaid
Internships

Faculty
Rock-Stars

Internships as Cultural Experiences

"So I was really really grateful that both of those internships happened, because I felt like I figured out culture stuff quickly, figured out like how I wanted to be able to interact with colleagues (and hopefully, friends), but I also learned that it's really important to me to care about the actual product that I'm representing...Like, I wanted to do a good job so that the team could do a good job and, I guess, so the company could succeed a little bit more. But it wasn't because of the product, it wasn't because I truly believed in it, it was because I happened to be there and working on it. Yeah, so I realized that was really important to me too."

- Sarah

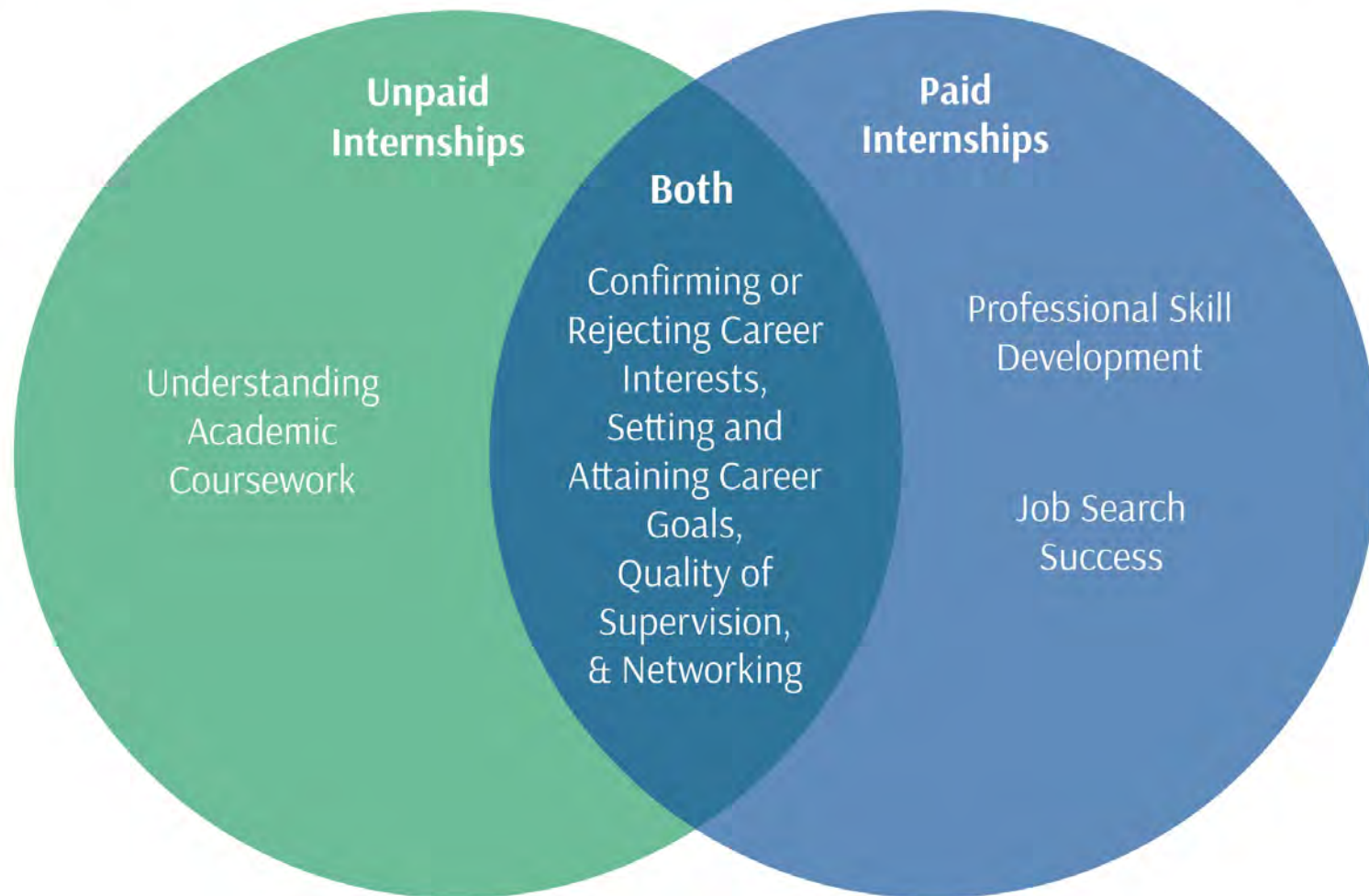
Internships as Cultural Experiences

*Well, I'm kind of country, even though I live in downtown Atlanta, which is my own living hell a little bit. But D.C., like...nobody drives up there, everyone's pretty much broke. Like senior staffers are barely making their rent. It's all this big flurry of anger and then everybody goes to happy hour and then drinks it all off. Whereas like in state politics, we get a phone call about a busted water main in some city I've never seen – and then the next day's news we see that it's fixed. That's a really quick example, but its things like that where you see stuff happening. D.C., I was up there a month and half and I didn't see one bill get voted on, except the Veteran's Care Act, which was unanimous, and it just seemed like everybody was yelling the whole time. I mean, it's definitely fun, but...I knew I could do Atlanta. I wasn't going to go up there and slum it out. *If I was on a campaign that won its way to D.C. I would love to go up there, but I'm not going to go job-hunting in Washington...the day I got back I was like 'I'm knowing what I'm doing before I ever consider going up there again'...But without an internship I probably would have just packed up the truck and went to D.C.*"*

- Michael

Discussion and Conclusions

Comparative Benefits of Paid and Unpaid Internship Experiences



Discussion

1. Could unpaid internships be re-conceptualized as exploratory/academic experiences?

Modes of Learning within Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory

Apprehension:
concrete
experience

Intension:
reflective
observation

Comprehension:
abstract
conceptualization

Extension:
active
experimentation



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Unpaid Internships
*"tangible, felt qualities of
immediate experience"*

Paid Internships
*"active manipulation of the
external world"*



Discussion

2. What potential gains could be made on our campus from this information?

How can we enhance paid internship opportunities in journalism, communication, or family and consumer sciences?

What can we do to improve internship opportunities for minority and transfer students?

How can we support our students in navigating the risks and benefits of unpaid internships?

Questions?

Andrew Crain (acrain@uga.edu)

Director, Experiential Professional Development (xPD)
The University of Georgia Graduate School