

valuable

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Off-campus internships provide students with skills, perspectives, and contacts that enhance their market value

by Kathy Punches '96, Director of Public Relations

Experiential learning remains a key feature of the academic mission of Defiance College. In the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Defiance College seniors ranked above the norm in completion of a community-based project as part of regular coursework.

These experiences provide students with skills, perspectives, and contacts that will make them more competitive in professional settings upon graduation.

Dr. Tim Rickabaugh, interim academic dean and former sport science experiential learning coordinator, has had plenty of experience in placing students in internships. "In that role, I was very proud of our students' accomplishments at highly visible settings such as the U.S. Olympic Training Center, the Detroit Tigers community relations department, and the Harvard University Department of Athletics. However, I was equally proud of their local impact on youth at the Defiance Area YMCA, the Lucas County Metropark System, and within local public school systems."

He adds: "Without quality experiential learning opportunities, DC students would not be able to fully experience our mission: to know, to understand, to lead, and to serve."

Internships within a program of study provide some of the most valuable skills through on-the-job learning experience and professional networking opportunities. Defiance students intern at a wide array of businesses, offices, and agencies.

Business majors have recently completed internships at Northwest Ohio sites including Smitley Accounting, Penrod and George Accounting, Indianapolis Peace Institute, and Defiance Water Recreation.

Social work majors receive valuable on-site experience. Recent sites have included Starfish Crisis Center in Detroit, Ohio Department of Youth Services, Williams County Children's Protective Services, Driver Intervention Program, Williams County Juvenile Court, Center for Child and Family Advocacy, Community Health Professionals - Defiance Visiting Nurses Hospice Inpatient, Four County Family Center, Corrections Center of Northwest Ohio, CHP Archbold Visiting Nurses Hospice Adult Day Care, Northwest Ohio Community Action Commission PATH Center, and Lenawee County Family Center.

For criminal justice majors looking to enter the law enforcement profession, internships have been conducted at locations such as the Defiance County Sheriff's Office, Defiance Police Department, Defiance County Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments, Defiance Municipal Probation Department, Defiance County and City Prosecutor's Office, Corrections Center of Northwest Ohio, and the Northwest Ohio Juvenile Detention Training and Rehabilitation Center.

Students enrolled in the education program are required to complete intensive hands-on classroom experience. Some areas require an early practicum, spending half-days as an apprentice to a master teacher. All education majors must complete a semester (15 weeks) of full day teaching experience.

History majors have recently completed internships with Sauder Village in Archbold, Historic Homes of Defiance, and Hale Farm and Village through the Western Reserve Historical Society. Senior Laura Derov

"I know that what I have learned during this internship will only help me in my future."

-- Justin Schafer,
DC student



interned as a historic interpreter at Hale Farm and Village. "Interning allowed me to discover more career opportunities in the history field," she said. "My position as an interpreter also allowed me to apply my historical knowledge and expand my knowledge of Ohio history."

Some unique and memorable internships of 2009 included senior Justin Schafer's internship as an assistant coach with the Patrick Henry High School baseball team. The sport management major worked with team members as their season took them on an amazing journey to the Division IV State Tournament. The Patriots won the state championship, and Schafer earned a championship ring.

"Having the chance to intern at Patrick Henry was a great opportunity to hone my skills," says Schafer. He notes that his mentors at the high school taught him many valuable skills in preparation for a career as a coach or athletic director. "I know that what I have learned during this internship will only help me in my future," he adds.

Senior history and international global studies major Kyle Shong interned in the Cleveland office of U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown. As an administrative assistant, Shong saw the inner workings of government and spent much of his time advocating for Ohioans in need. The experience was a valuable learning tool for Shong who wants to enter public service after graduation. ♦