NEXT Training

Northwestern Career Advancement
Northwestern Alumni Association

Northwestern
Today’s Agenda

• Learning Outcomes for NEXT and Training Session
• Definition of an Externship and What to Expect
• How to Prepare for your Externship
• What to do After your Externship
• Networking Tips
• Final thoughts in preparing
Definition and Expectations

• What is an Externship?
  – Provides you the opportunity to interact/observe a professional in a career you are interested in pursuing.

• How long is an Externship?
  – Typically one day in length, though can be negotiated between you and your Alumni Host.

• What can I expect from an Externship?
  – To gain experience and knowledge through observing and speaking with the host employer in their work environment.
Learning Outcomes for NEXT

By participating in NEXT you will be able to…

1. List the typical duties associated with the job of the alumnus you shadow

2. Describe the skills/qualities needed to be successful in the job you observed

3. Articulate the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing a career in the industry you learned about through shadowing in light of your personal skills, interests and goals
Learning Outcomes for Training Session

By the end of this training, you will be able to…

1. Use online resources to research career paths and/or organization prior to your externship
2. List 3 things you can do to prepare for an externship
3. Formulate at least 5 open-ended questions to ask alumnae during your externship
Logistics

By now you should have:

• Been Matched with an Alumni Host

• Made Contact with your Alumni Host

• Be Close to Finalizing Your Schedule for the day
Sample introductory email

- Thank alumni for choosing you
- class year, major, school
- 1-3 sentences about why you are interested in their company/career
- Ask about logistics:
  - Ask what dates the alumni would like to host you (remember it’s according to their schedule)
  - A possible schedule of the day
  - Dress code
  - Directions/lunch
Before Externship

• Questions to ask Alumni prior to day:
  – Where and to whom should I report to when I arrive?
  – What is the appropriate attire for this environment?
  – Agenda or schedule for the day
  – Logistics of lunch (where, how)

• Things to look up on your own
  – Review host’s profile and company on Linkedin
  – Company address and directions
Dress Code

• Even though you are not interviewing, you are still creating an impression on your Host and their organization

• If the attire is business professional and you do not own a suit, inquire as to the possibility of wearing a variation

• Wear professional but comfortable shoes!
Things to bring with you

• Identification
• Notepad or padfolio
• Pen
• Resume (optional)
• Money for lunch/incidentals
• Make sure your phone is turned OFF!
How to Prepare for Your Externship

• Learn about the industry and the company prior to your scheduled day:
  – Industry:
    • What do people do in this industry?
    • What are its functional areas?
    • What kind of skill sets are expected?
    • What are the current trends for this industry?
  – Company:
    • What is their mission/purpose for existence?
    • What are their philosophies and core values?
    • What is their reputation with clientele/customers?
    • Has the company been in the news lately?
Resources for Research

- The Company Website: (look under “PR Releases, about us, media”, etc. for recent news about the organization)
- Glassdoor
- Hoovers
- Vault
- Wetfeet
- Occupational Outlook Handbook

Access through NCA Website
www.northwestern.edu/careers
(“Resources”)
Create a Plan

• Set goals and expectations with your Alumni Host
• What questions do you want to have answered by the time you leave?
• Ideas on how to use your time:
  – Request a tour
  – Sit in on a meeting
  – Watch your Host “in action”
  – Meet with other individuals
  – Ask your host to review your resume
## Potential Questions to Ask

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Goals</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To explore career fit</strong></td>
<td>• How did you decide on this career?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How does this career fit your interests, values, and skills?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• What are your main duties?</td>
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<td>• What skills are most important for success?</td>
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<td>• What kind of person does well in this industry/company?</td>
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<td><strong>To prepare for a career in a specific industry</strong></td>
<td>• How did your time at NU (inside and outside the classroom) prepare you for this field?</td>
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<td>• What are some challenges to working in this industry?</td>
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<td>• What experiences should I engage in to be better prepared for this industry?</td>
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<td>• How is this field/industry changing?</td>
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<td><strong>To learn about a specific company</strong></td>
<td>• It seems that every organization has its own personality. How would you characterize yours?</td>
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<td>• What do you like most/least about working for this company?</td>
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<td><strong>To learn internship/job strategies</strong></td>
<td>• What are methods and resources for getting internships/jobs in this industry/company?</td>
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<td>• What resources would you recommend I use to find an internship/job in this industry?</td>
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<td>• Who else would you recommend I talk with about employment in this industry/company?</td>
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During the Externship

• Be Enthusiastic, Polite, Inquisitive and Energetic
  – Don’t expect to be busy 100% of the time
  – Don’t be afraid to approach people
  – Ask lots of questions

• What to do with “Idle Time”:
  • Write down questions you have as a result of your interactions
  • Offer your help to your Host
  • Read industry-related information or a book/textbook
  • Tour the company/office

• DON’T start texting/facetimming/checking email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.
Networking - What is it?

- Established professional or personal connections with others
  - To develop a mutual support system
  - To tap into a hidden employment market
  - To interact with people who are members of your target field
  - To explore career options
  - To market yourself to potential employers
Develop Your Story

Professional Story -
Offers information that allows someone to connect with you over a shared interest or experience. You prepared to talk about yourself by developing a 30 second story

How to do it:

- Create a brief introduction to who you are
  - Offer a few key facts designed to generate a conversation allowing someone to get to know you.
- Highlight strengths
  - Examples of what you enjoy or have become good at (from student activities, class, past or current internships)
- What have you learned from self-evaluation
Do’s and Don’ts of Networking

Do:
• Listen and take notes (bring something to take notes on; laptop, paper, pad or phone)
• Guide the flow of conversation by using your goals and prepared questions
• Ask for referrals to other people in the field

Don’t:
• Ask for a job or internship
• Engage in negative conversations, gossip, or share unrelated information
• Act uninterested. Be aware of nonverbal behavior.
• Be afraid to ask questions
After Your Externship

• Be sure to get contact information: “Do you mind if I take your business card/email in case I think of any more questions?”

• Follow up with a thank you email within 48 hours!

• Stay in touch with Alumni Host through LinkedIn, email, or phone

• Write down what you learned about the industry, job and/or company and how it fits (or doesn’t) with your interests, values and skills

• Add your experience to your Resume:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
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<td>NBC News, New York, NY March, 2014</td>
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- Extern
  • Shadowed Senior Producer to increase knowledge of national news show production
  • Learned job functions and responsibilities of staff integral to production
After your Externship continued

• Maintain your relationship with your new networking contact(s)

• Connect with NCA for help with:
  – Further career exploration and self assessment
  – Resume/cover letter reviews
  – Internship and full time job resources and search strategies

• Set up new contact meetings for additional informational interviews (using LinkedIn & Our Northwestern)

• Connect with NAA:
  – More opportunities and resources to connect with alumni
Sample Activities

*National Geographic Magazine*
- Visit PR staff-review upcoming press releases
- Observe upcoming book layout
- Visit NG museum
- Talk with alumni host about career paths at magazine/organization

*Chicago Board of Trade*
- Observe trading floor
- Discuss trends in trading with alumni host
- Sit in on staff meetings

*Northwestern Memorial Hospital-Anesthesiology*
- Observe surgery
- Talk with colleagues about various specializations
- Follow alumni host on patient rounds
Alumni Quotes

When asked *What did you enjoy most about the externship program?* alumni replied:

“The chance to help out a fellow Wildcat. I also really appreciate that she spent a good deal of time researching so that she could ask great questions.”

“The actual hosting day was definitely the best part. It was fantastic to interact with a student interested in my field and provide her as many ‘legs up’ as I could.”

“The opportunity to underscore the value of the NU alumni network to existing students...nice to connect with young people.”
Optional Social Media & Blogging Opportunities

• Enter our #WhatsNEXTNU photo contest between Monday, Mar. 21 - Tuesday, April 26.
  – Post a photo on Instagram or Twitter of either 1) yourself at your host company/organization site or 2) with your NU alumni host (with your alumni host’s permission) and tag with #WhatsNEXTNU
  – Four winners (profile must be public) will be selected at random to receive a $25 gift card to the Northwestern bookstore in Norris

• Contribute a short guest post about your NEXT experience for the NCA blog

• Find NCA on social media @NUCareerAdvance on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

• More details & instructions will be emailed to NEXT participants before externships begin
Other Important Information

• It Can't Be Repeated Enough:
  – You are representing Northwestern University on your externship
  – Remember to be appreciative of your host
  – If you do have any questions, concerns, or issues that arise, please contact us: next.student@northwestern.edu
  – There is no future obligation of any kind, by either the Alumni Host or the student.

Have fun!