

# PDP Communiqué

## Value-Added Internships

**Eugene J. Monaco,**  
Executive Director, Professional Development Program

How organizations create solutions to meet the pressing need for qualified, talented employees over the next decade will prove interesting at the least and break new ground in workforce preparation models at best. The aging out of the baby-boomer generation is dropping this problem directly in the laps of organizations everywhere stimulating heated debate about the best ways to achieve knowledge transfer, performance maintenance, and next-generation workforce development. While hiring ready-to-work employees who require very little, if any, training or job preparation is desirable it clearly conflicts with reality — that students don't graduate ready to work; they need real world work preparation. We in colleges and universities have an opportunity to help address the challenge of creating the next generation workforce. One response is through student internship programs. As employers confront the reality of the workforce gap, they will increasingly turn to colleges and universities for partnerships that pay off for both student interns and employers. Higher education needs to be ready to respond.

There are numerous benefits to internship programs for participating students, organizations, and academic institutions alike. One of the most obvious is that the internship experience has a strong influence on the students' preparation for entering the job market, which has both a short-term hiring advantage for the student and a long-term career impact for organizations if this preparation is successful.

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## Professional Internships: Partnerships for the Future

**David Liebschutz, Public Service Professor & Assistant  
Dean for Career and Alumni Programs**

While classroom learning and independent research are crucial to training the next generation of public sector managers, it is the third leg of the stool, the practical hands-on experience that makes a student's career at Rockefeller College something special.

Students in our two public affairs masters' programs (public administration and public policy) are required to do at least one semester's worth of practical training as part of their graduate program. In addition, our political science

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A Newsletter from the  
**Professional  
Development Program,  
Rockefeller College**



UNIVERSITY  
AT ALBANY

State University of New York



*David Liebschutz, Public Service  
Professor and Assistant Dean for  
Career and Alumni Programs*

PHOTO: MARK SCHMIDT

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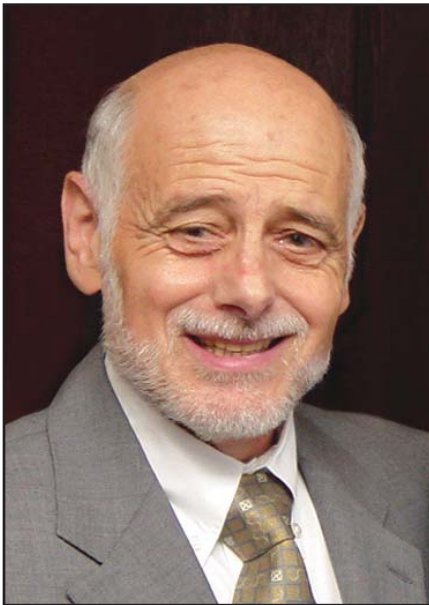


PHOTO: GEORGE DOWSE

*Eugene J. Monaco, Executive Director  
and Public Service Professor*

### Value-Added Internships

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However, the level of accomplishment depends upon a strong working compact between the academic institutions and the employers to establish optimal conditions for success. The internship needs to be a carefully planned work or service experience for which the student has established conscious learning goals and objectives that are shared with the organization and realistic in terms of what can be expected from the placement. Second, a planned learning agreement should be integrated into the experience. This clearly differentiates an internship from a short-term job or volunteer work. And third, learning objectives incorporating planned observations by faculty along with student-employer-faculty evaluation and assessments need to be an integral aspect of the internship.

Often overlooked is the need to establish a reasonable balance between intern learning goals and the specific work required by the host organization. This means a clear understanding that the organization needs real work accomplished while the student learns — the core aspects of a win-win internship. Faculty can play a crucial role in mediating this for students. Successful internship programs promote academic, career, and personal development outcomes for students, but they also require a strong

and continuing commitment from both the academic institution and the employer in meeting these goals and objects. Without a clear working partnership and mutually agreed-upon learning agreement, an internship experience can sour quickly and result in a negative work experience, starting the student off on a shaky career path.

At the Professional Development Program we've used this approach to advance an internship model that encompasses all these points in providing meaningful real world learning experiences for both graduate and undergraduate students. With support from the Dean's Office we've recruited bright and motivated students from Rockefeller College who are interested in a public service internship experience to prepare them for potential public sector careers. We have been concurrently successful in finding relevant job placements for them with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). A large part of our overall success can be attributed to OTDA's responsiveness in meeting the needs of interns by investing the required supervisory time to accomplish the learning objectives while creating a bond with apprentice professionals which establishes a positive career outlook.

Maintaining quality internship programs needs to be a priority for both academic institutions and employers if they are to achieve the desired results. Internship experiences are one way to address the overarching need for preparing students to be ready contributors upon entering the workforce. This issue of the Communique reports on the PDP internship experience from the perspectives of academic institution, host organization, and student. We believe that the model we've developed at PDP is on the mark for today's needs and welcome the opportunity to work with other organizations in providing our high-potential students with challenging internship opportunities.

### PDP Recognizes Frank Thompson

Rockefeller College of Public Affairs Dean, Frank Thompson, is recognized for his sustained commitment to continuing professional education for the public service. Dean Thompson is stepping down after 18 years of providing leadership for the College to take a well-deserved sabbatical during which he will do research and writing before returning to the faculty.



PHOTO: RON FANCHER

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# ***Coordinating Program Activity: An Agency Perspective on Internship Experience***

**Dale Peterson, Director, Transitional Programs, Division of Employment and Training Services, NYS OTDA**

Courtney Hayden began her internship with the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance in June 2005. Specifically, she was assigned to the Bureau of Transitional Programs (BTP) within the Division of Employment and Transitional Supports. BTP's responsibilities are primarily programs that move individuals and families from dependency on public assistance programs. These programs include the Transitional Opportunities Program, The EITC/Tax Preparation Project and the Disability Advocacy Program.

We were very fortunate to have Courtney join our staff in June because she was able to help us as we embarked on a new initiative, Financial Literacy, for which she had primary responsibility. Courtney

developed, sent, and compiled results of a survey distributed to every social services district in the State. The survey assessed local district interest in offering financial literacy services to clients. At the same time she participated in meetings with the State Employee Federal Credit Union (SEFCU) which will provide the services to districts and ultimately participated in meetings between the districts and SEFCU to actually bring services to the districts' clients.

Another project Courtney assumed responsibility for is a program established by National Fuel Gas in Western New York to provide a \$400 gas credit for low-income NFG customers who are transitioning off of cash assistance through the Customer Assistance Referral and Evaluation

Services (CARES) program. She worked to support local districts in establishing a referral process to connect clients to the program, monitor the process, provide technical assistance and support as needed to districts, and provide feedback to NFG. We plan on using her abilities in the future for follow-up with the local districts and compiling findings for continual improvement.

During Courtney's tenure here she has proven that she has an excellent grasp of the information she is working with and is able to work independently. Most telling, we have come to view her not as an intern but as a valued staff person. Our hope is that she has benefited as much by her experience at our Bureau as we have.

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# ***Learning by Doing: An Internship Perspective***

**Christopher King, PDP Student Intern**

With a focus on how county websites provide information about public-supported services, my research internship afforded me the freedom to creatively formulate objective criteria and the opportunity to explore NYS counties in a unique way. I was able to use some of my classroom policy experience as background for understanding the programs and counties being examined. There were many instances during the experience when I had to "think outside the box." The skills developed through the internship will inform classroom discussions, meetings with faculty, and involvement with my campus student organization. My internship with the Professional Development Program helped develop my analytical and

problem-solving skills for use in my classes.

My internship exposed me to the diversity of New York's 62 counties. It seems that there may be a correlation between appreciation for the value of the Internet as an information source and attitudes of county policymakers. Many county websites were aesthetically pleasing, but lacked information on programs for the public instead focusing mainly on tourism. On the other hand a few county sites were clear and informative, although rather dull aesthetically, with the necessary content to answer many frequently asked questions. In concluding the project the websites seem to be a direct reflection of county priorities. In other words, those that concentrate their sites on tourism, are

mainly interested in bringing in sight-seers, and those that focus on the services they provide are counties whose citizens are their priority.

This project also afforded me a working relationship with Dean Frank Thompson of Rockefeller College and Lanny Parsons of the Professional Development Program. Having the access to talk to these faculty members has given me a comfortable niche at the University at Albany that is rewarding for me as a student. I would wholeheartedly recommend an internship with PDP to any undergraduate interested in public service or policy. My advice would be to pursue an internship with diligence and enthusiasm because you will be able to apply theory practically, and will learn quite a bit about yourself as well.

graduate students and public administration doctoral students also use the internship experience to complement their classroom learning and enhance their resumes.

For students without any prior professional experience, these internships are an important component in their “tool-box” as they launch their careers in the public, non-profit or private sectors. The ability to apply professional skills learned in the classroom, such as memo writing and data analysis, in real world situations gives the interns a sense of the world

beyond the classroom and insight into future career options.

The value of the internship to our partners in government and the non-profit sector are also considerable. First and foremost, they get a chance to audition potential entry-level professionals without the costly recruiting process. Secondly, in times of scarce dollars for staffing, it is a source of inexpensive, highly qualified assistance for them. Finally, it is often a way to give back to the program that they either graduated from or believe in as an academic enterprise.

In short, our professional internship program is a crucial element in the graduate programs at Rockefeller College. It is service learning at its best, and while not every placement is a perfect fit, the vast majority of them fulfill an extremely useful function for both the intern and the placement site.

For further information on hosting a professional intern, please contact David Liebschutz, the Assistant Dean for Career and Alumni Programs at Rockefeller College, at 518-442-5253 or Rockefeller.careers@albany.edu.

## Did You Know?

- Every year, cities and towns throughout the United States receive over \$4 billion worth of volunteer service from students who attend local colleges. More than 30 percent of students participate in community service, averaging four hours of service a week.

*(Campus Compact Annual Member Survey)*

- Internships are becoming the preferred path to a permanent position.

*(Recruiting Trends)*

- For new college graduates looking to enter the work force, participating in an internship is likely to be even more important in the future than it is now.

*(National Association of Colleges and Employers)*

- More than a quarter of the current working U.S. population will reach retirement age by 2010. Many employers are failing to capture critical knowledge and experience from older employees approaching retirement and few seem able to transfer valuable knowledge to newer employees.

*(Society for Human Resource Management)*

- One-fifth of the executives, managers and workers with critical skills companies need to survive may leave by 2008 because of baby boom generation retirements.

*(IBM Business Consulting Services' Human Capital Management Group)*

- Industries in the US currently feeling the greatest pain in terms of skills shortages are oil, gas, energy, healthcare and government. Leading companies in these sectors are turning to mature workers to ensure future growth and productivity.

*(Conference Board)*

## Public Service Workshops Program Returns to PDP



PHOTO: GEORGE DOWSE

The Professional Development Program (PDP), Rockefeller College, has received a \$3.5 million contract from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) for the Public Service Workshops Program. The Program provides professional development and training for employees of New York State in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services Unit, who are represented by the Public Employees Federation.

PDP members working on the program include Executive Director Eugene J. Monaco, Associate Director Diane Tesiny, and Training Program Coordinator Sally Daggett.

Seated: Kelly Lopez (GOER), Eugene J. Monaco (PDP), Cliff Merchant (PEF). Standing: Camille Stasior (GOER), Diane Tesiny (PDP), Sally Daggett (PDP).

## Coordinated Childrens' Services Initiative

PDP, in partnership with the Center for Human Services Research, OCFS, OMH and SED, is pleased to have been awarded funding for the first year of a potential five year contract, to provide training and evaluation to the statewide Coordinated Childrens' Services Initiative (CCSI). The interagency initiative supports localities to create systems of care that ensure children at risk of residential placement remain home with their families, in their communities. Project and partner staff, family representatives and other key state and local collaborators will develop curriculum, and provide training and evaluation services to selected counties statewide, in using principles that guide a process of cooperative interagency planning to develop and deliver individualized services to children and their families.

## PDP Supports Workplace Diversity



PHOTO: MARK SCHMIDT

PDP Associate Director, June Mastan and Dr. Hazel M. Prelow, Assistant Professor of Psychology, welcome participants to *Winning in the Workplace: An Equal Opportunity Institute* on November 1st. Both Ms. Mastan and Dr. Prelow are members of the University at Albany Commission on Diversity and Affirmative Action.

## Director's Award

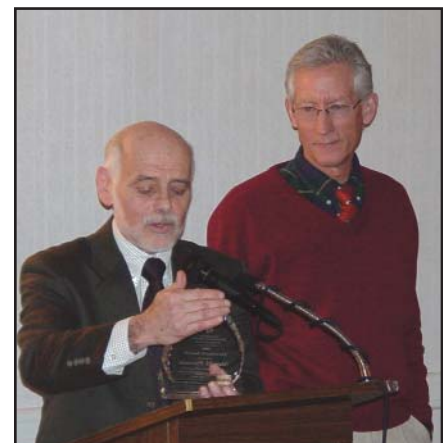


PHOTO: RON FANCHER

Associate Director, Lanny Parsons receives the Director's Award from Eugene J. Monaco for his outstanding record of achievement during the course of a 20 year career with PDP. Recognizing significant contributions to its mission and reputation as a premiere continuing professional education and training organization, the award will be made annually to a PDP staff member.

## Extended Learning Scholarship Program Recipients

During its 25-year celebration in 2001, PDP established the Extended Learning Scholarship Program as part of its long-standing commitment to maintaining a comprehensive learning environment for staff. During 2005, ELSP helped four PDP staff complete degrees. From left to right, Erika Leveillee (Master of Arts in Social Policy), Marina Taylor (Bachelor of Arts in Sociology), Natalie Jay-Short (Bachelor of Science in Human and Community Services), and Susan Kalafut (Master of Science in Communication).



PHOTO: GEORGE DOWSE



PHOTO: MARK SCHMIDT

## Extended Learning Leadership Award

The 2005 Extended Learning Leadership Award of Excellence is presented to Peter J. Casale, Director of Training and Organization Development for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Established in 2001, the award recognizes persons who have demonstrated exemplary leadership and made significant contributions in the field of extended learning for the public service.

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