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INTERNSHIPS; THE KEY TO THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION

BY

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ABSTRACT

The key to the future of the profession is the entering professional. This is where new ideas and change is brought about to improve the quality of the profession. The internship is a critical phase in the training and preparation of students because it represents the point at which the student moves from the classroom to the world of work. This is the point where the student is more susceptible to change and will learn his future work habits. It is at this point that attitudes are formulated and the foundation is laid for how the individual will contribute to the profession.

INTERNSHIPS; THE KEY TO THE FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION

There may be no more critical time in a professional's life than when he or she obtains his/her professional experience. This, in essence, sets the tone for the next few years of the professional development and may be related to years beyond. If the student is frustrated, this may drive him completely out of the profession into another employment endeavor. The key dimension to a positive internship is the internship supervisor and his or her willingness to work with the individual to critically examine the student's strengths and weaknesses in the work setting and to make constructive criticisms about how these may be strengthened through improved job performance. The internship is an opportunity to try the world of work and to correct those factors in a controlled setting before the student takes his/her first job and does not have an opportunity to change with consequential results.

Seabrook Island Company is dedicated to the development of a quality student intern program. The intern program at Seabrook is a result of cooperation among the company, the university, and the student individualizing a program that will provide each student with a valuable educational experience.

Seabrook Island is located 23 miles south of Charleston, South Carolina on a three thousand acre island. With three miles of ocean beach and hundreds of acres of tropical vegetation, Seabrook Island Company has dedicated itself to creating an outstanding resort and residential community for gracious living on a protected, natural environment.

The Primary goals of the intern Program is to provide the student with a valuable educational experience by exposing him or her to a variety of internal operations by placing the student in a specified period of time with each of the internal operations. While at Seabrook there will be opportunities to interact with other professionals, absorb programs, visit other agencies and organizations, conduct business and programming workshops and assist with job placement. The key to quality internship program at Seabrook is the type of experiential areas for the intern: children's programming, youth programming, teen and family programs, rental station operation, swimming pool operations, management of the recreation center, fitness center programming, golf or/and tennis shop operation, and equestrian center operations. Other educational opportunities are available depending upon the experience and desire of the individual. Each intern should select their program carefully so as to match his or her needs and to try to work in all phases of the operation. The diversity of experience is what allows the individual to help him or her make career choices and obtain an overall perspective on how each phase of an operation has to work together to provide a service.

The internship experience at Seabrook is about two years old. Last summer was the first summer of full operations. The procedure that we use to recruit students was a national advertising program. The initial contact from the student should be made with the approval of the coordinator at the university or college where the student is enrolled. The student is requested to forward a cover letter indicating their reason for choosing Seabrook, their intern goals and interests and experience as well as a complete resume and three personal contacts. An initial contact or follow up is recommended and an interview is required, even if on the telephone. Applications are evaluated to determine if the interests of the students can best be served at Seabrook Island. Two important phases of the internship process are providing information both to the university and the student so that they can actively take part in this selection process and help the student determine if Seabrook is the type of experience that is desired. The selection process is critical to all three individuals involved because an internship that has not been thoughtfully conceived and designed produces much anxiety and frustration. The selection process is critical and it must be open and negotiable by all parties involved.

Students still under preparation for internship should take note that in addition to the programming skills there is also a need in terms of working in the commercial sector to have a good grasp and understanding of business skills. Another important job competency is the ability to work with people and having the proper professional attitude. This professional attitude must be one in which the individual is aggressive, eager, and enthusiastic to complete all work assignments. The important item for the student to remember, in terms of acquiring additional skills, is that the commercial recreation enterprise is a people related business. Its primary job is quality service.

The internship is an extremely important phase of the student's life. As I reflect back on my internship experience at Kiawah Island, it was instrumental in preparing me for my current job at Seabrook as well as being very instrumental in obtaining employment at Seabrook. The internship, it must be remembered, is a learning experience and is a phase in the student's life that will have implications for professional development, especially in terms of doing a quality job for positive recommendations. Seabrook Island Company is dedicated to the development of a quality internship. The easiest way to express this is that Seabrook Island Company is a cooperator in educational development and is open and willing to entertain ideas from students and faculty.