

The background features a dark blue gradient with a series of curved, parallel lines that create a sense of depth and movement. On the right side, there is a grid of light blue lines that recedes into the distance, suggesting a tunnel or a perspective view.

Mecosta-Osceola ISD Internship Program

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Who?

- Mecosta-Osceola ISD is working with Ferris State University to place Juniors & Seniors in an internship Program
- Bob Dwan from MSBO has been working with us from step one to create this partnership with FSU
- With a goal toward creating the next generation of MSBO members Bob has been working to create a support structure from MSBO for our interns



What are you doing?

- We are offering 80 hour, one credit hour, during the regular year internship program.
 - This allows the students to still take a full class load while in the program.
 - We pay \$10/hour and we pay for the fingerprinting of the students.
 - We are flexible to try to make it work with their schedules.
- Extended the hours up to a 240 hour, three credit hour internship in the summer months are possible.
- We have capacity for two interns maximum at any time given space in our current office.

How did we get started?

- Summer 2016 – Reached out to Bob Dwan at MSBO to see if this was something they wanted to partner on. Sit down discussion at MSBO Up North Finance Committee.
- October 2016 – Contacted Ferris State via email. Reached out to Accounting Department Chair, found on their website. He brought internship coordinator into the discussion and we set up a meeting, Bob came up to attend.
- November 2016 – Discovering Accounting Careers Night
- December 2016 – Job Posting Approved and shared by Ferris, interviews third week in December.
- January 2017 – INTERNS STARTED!!!

Benefits to MOISD and Students

- Real excitement from FSU and their students for a career field they did not know existed.
- For the students they get real practical experience to build upon the theoretical lessons they learn in class. Helps to understand how the those lessons are actually used.
- On campus work typically only pays the students minimum wage, so they get a slight increase working for us.
- After some training early on they are able to take actual work off our plates, this is not just a classroom, we put them to work and the do a good job.
- With our location and part time internship program we could have a student intern with us for two full years before they graduate.

Surprises Along the Way

- We were pleasantly surprised with how quickly the students learned the software package we used.
- They told me on day 1, "I was glad you had me doing things and learning. I thought I'd be getting coffee."
- Debated having the students work on different days, but were happy it turned out they needed to work the same day. Less time instructing, and good work done through group work.

Challenges that have Occurred

- Change in leadership of the Ferris intern program, had to build new relationships with new partners within the department.
- Lining up post graduation employment.
 - Many students notice that their classmates may have job offers from the firms they interned for their entire senior year.
- Would actually like to take interns to more conferences or meetings, but classes take priority.
- Integrating a student who is not used to a business office environment into your culture can take time.

Key Takeaways

- They are a valuable resource to add to your business office, and can be added at a rather affordable price.
- The work you put into the program and the students can be time consuming, but it will also be rewarding with the work they do and the future placements they receive.
- Do not limit what you give them to do, push them to do any and all tasks in your office so they get a true feel for how the industry works.
- Just get the program started, the first steps are the hardest part (and they are actually pretty easy).

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