

THE NEWSPAPER INTERNSHIP GAME:
HOW TO BE A WINNER

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Chapel Hill
2006

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ABSTRACT

CAROLINE K. HAUSER: The Newspaper Internship Game: How To Be A Winner
(Under the direction of Professor Jan Yopp)

Students, educators and journalism professionals agree that internships are the surest route to post-graduation employment in the newspaper industry. The three groups dedicate significant amounts of time and money to ensuring appropriate internship placements, but frustration persists on all sides.

Using the newsgathering method outlined by Yopp and McAdams in 2003, this nontraditional thesis examines several structural factors of newspaper internships. Specifically, this includes the industry's trend toward offering fewer internships, racial and socioeconomic diversity issues, students' frustrations with the internship application process, and the difference in newspapers' philosophies for internships.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Every fall, hundreds of students apply for newspaper internships for the following summer. Every winter, the 1,500 daily newspapers in this country choose anywhere from zero to 24 students to work as interns. Every summer, some of these matches delight and some disappoint both employers and employees. What's the solution to the internship equation that allows the best experience for both sides? Are there specific aspects that determine what will make or break an internship?

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the newspaper internship experience. The subject is complex. Professional journalists, educators, and students all know that internships are a crucial component of a new graduate's résumé, but all internship experiences are not created equal. Some internships don't pay, some pay \$350 per week, and some pay \$925 per week. Some newspapers assign mentors to their interns; others introduce students to their assigning editors, who then send them out the door to find a story. Some offer enrichment programs, such as brown bag lunches, guest speakers, and field trips, while others incorporate no educational programs.

On the other hand, some interns have years of experience from college publications and previous internships, while others have trouble talking to strangers. Some have a command of spelling and grammar, while others don't know what the Associated Press is, let alone that it has a stylebook. Some interns show up for every staff meeting, while others are

chronically late to work. Some launch national internship searches that include dozens of newspapers, while some never even apply outside their home state because they can't afford to pay rent in two places for three months.

This thesis does not reveal which newspapers have the best internship programs or what types of students are destined to fail in their summer work. Rather, it examines the three areas of potential trouble for newspaper internships: the application and hiring process, logistical factors related to the internship, and the internship itself. A broad look at the experiences of students, educators, and internship coordinators could help all the players master the game.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Donald Trump did not invent the apprenticeship. Thinkers in ancient Greece fretted about whole person education and the interplay between learning and working. By the Middle Ages, craft guilds had established a system of apprenticeship under which youths could learn a trade from a master craftsman. The apprentice got the training he needed to make a living; in return, the craftsman got cheap labor. In the 1800s, U.S. ideals gave rise to pragmatism, a school of thought that links theoretical significance to real world application. Prominent pragmatist John Dewey further developed the philosophy, laying the theoretical foundation for the modern internship.

Experiential Education

In his pedagogic creed, Dewey announced, “I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child’s powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself.” He elaborated, “I believe accordingly that the primary basis of education is in the child's powers at work along the same general constructive lines as those which have brought civilization into being. I believe that the only way to make the child conscious of his social heritage is to enable him to perform those fundamental types of activity which make civilization what it is” (Dewey, 1897/2005). Under this model, the formal education process becomes something of an apprenticeship for citizenship. Dewey’s concept of progressive education developed into what is now known as experiential

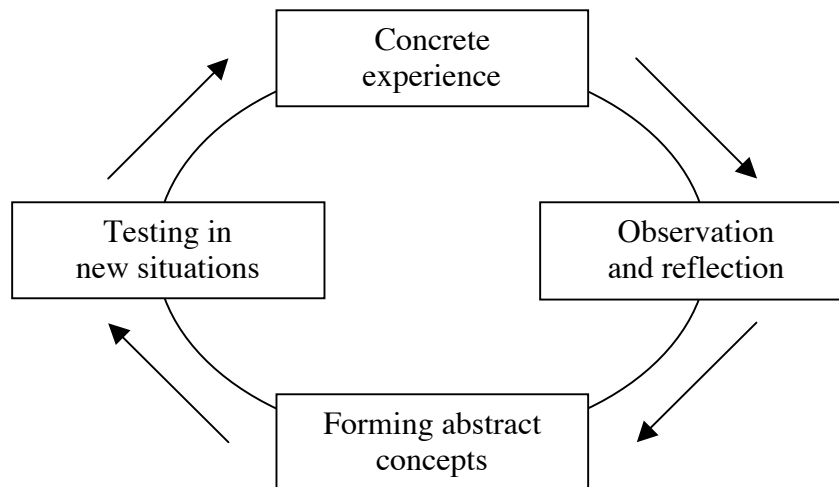
education (Scannell and Simpson, 1996). Scannell and Simpson (1996) posit this definition of experiential learning:

Simply stated, experiential education provides the opportunity and the environment for students to experience first-hand, outside the classroom, activities and functions which relate directly to the application of knowledge.
(14)

This application of theoretical knowledge became increasingly important as professional training, including science, medicine, and law, proliferated in colleges and universities (Stanton and Ali, 1982).

Experiential education is not limited, however, to application. Ciofalo (1992) argues that students actually acquire knowledge through experiential education and that experience is the precursor to rather than the derivative of theory. In both the mental work (acquisition of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) and the social work (the definition, creation, use, and transformation of knowledge, as well as the taking on of responsibility and complex expectations) it requires, experiential education can “spark forms of learning that are fully as developed, sound, and rigorous as anything encountered in classrooms” (Moore, 1992, 19). Kolb (1984) developed a model, depicted below, for knowledge formation in experiential learning.

Figure 1. Kolb's experiential education model



Experiential education takes many forms in secondary and post-secondary education. These include but are not limited to internships, cooperative education, service learning, field work, volunteer work, externships, shadowing programs, apprenticeships, and work-study programs (Green, 1997). For this thesis, the experiential learning model in question is the internship.

Internships

Dewey's pedagogy notwithstanding, the evolution of American internships "has been determined more by socioeconomic-political issues than by consideration of educational objectives" (Wentz & Ford, 1984). The working definition of "internship" for this paper comes from Stanton and Ali (1982):

[An internship is] any experience wherein students learn by taking on responsible roles as workers in organizations and observing and reflecting on what happens while they are there. (1)

Hellweg and Flacione (1985) list five goals of student internships: (1) to acquire first-hand knowledge about the field of work; (2) to explore new professional activities and relationships; (3) to apply conceptual knowledge and skill to the work environment; (4) to

experience the problems and successes of efficiently and effectively communicating within a complex organization; and (5) to learn by doing. This educational and reflective aspect is what sets an internship apart from traditional summer jobs such as waiting tables or tearing movie tickets. Expected outcomes of internships include increased self-esteem, acquisition of particular skills and knowledge, and exposure to real-world career options. But the fluid nature of experiential education may make these outcomes a challenge to achieve. Stanton and Ali (1992) point out:

Internships are delicate balances between putting out through work and service and taking in through the learning derived from such experiences. If the work or service element seriously outweighs learning in an internship, the experience may become boring and repetitive and lose its educational value. If learning seriously outweighs working or serving, the internship may lose its unique participatory element and resemble a “field trip” rather than an experiential learning experience. (42)

Part of what determines whether an internship maintains that balance is the track it follows. Green (1997) identifies five common internship tracks: observer, odd jobs, prime function, project centered, and apprentice. The observer track “emphasizes watching and assessing rather than hands-on participation” (128). The odd jobs track is characterized by the use of interns as “a cost-effective means of adding staff while, incidentally, giving students the benefit of exposure to their field of choice” (132). The prime function track allows interns to become competent in and perhaps relied upon to do a particular task, but attempts to broaden the scope of the internship are likely to be met with resistance (135). Interns on the project track may be responsible for the entirety of a special project, but may face a lack of integration in the workplace (138). In the apprentice track, students are “clearly being treated like full-fledged, although junior, employees, rather than temporary interns” (140). For this paper, the most relevant tracks are “odd jobs” and “apprentice,” particularly in how they

allow interns to achieve Sweitzer and King's (2004) competency stage. Sweitzer and King found that students and employers can anticipate five developmental stages during internships: (1) anticipation, (2) disillusionment, (3) confrontation, (4) competence, and (5) culmination. While internships are not usually formulaic – dependent as they are on participating parties – it is useful to consider that some concerns, while not necessarily universal, occur frequently enough to generalize from.

Newspaper Internships

Editors, students, and journalism faculty seem to be on the same page about the importance of internships. Horowitz (1996) found that internships pay off tangibly in higher starting salaries for recent journalism and mass communication graduates, and Heider (1996) found that students “generally hold more realistic views of their practical, applied skills after internships.” But a couple of sample internship opportunity listings immediately show that at least some newspaper internships are at odds with theoretical definitions of the internship experience:

Our internship program seeks college juniors, seniors, and graduate students who thrive in a “sink or swim” atmosphere. This is not a classroom situation. The emphasis is on doing, not teaching. Applicants must have at least one previous internship at a daily newspaper other than college. We set the same high performance standards for interns as we do for our regular staff members. We do not have make-work, trivial “intern assignments.” Tribune interns must be able to – and often do – cover major stories their first few days on the job. (From *The Chicago Tribune*)

The Times offers hands-on journalism work experience. However, little training is provided, so previous newspaper internship experience is preferable. (From *The Los Angeles Times*)

These internship listings are particularly interesting in their emphasis that they are not teaching situations and, therefore, only students with previous internship experience will be accepted. *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Los Angeles Times* are among the largest papers in

the land, and they have many resources, including full-time recruiting and development staff. It seems these two prominent papers are saying that students should have done their “learning” at smaller newspapers – many of which are able to offer much less in the way of summer internship programs. Such listings – far from rare – can be contrasted with others to see the wide range in internship programs:

The first week of the internship is an orientation program to New York City and the newsroom. (From *The New York Times*)

During the first week, we have a welcome lunch to introduce interns to senior editors, a daylong bus tour of the Washington metropolitan area and computer training. We also have seminars on surviving the summer, legal and libel issues, and newsroom online operations. Weekly lunches with senior editors and reporters as guest speakers enhance understanding of The Washington Post and the industry. (From *The Washington Post*)

The question is whether internship designs like the ones above affect students’ experiences, and this question is addressed in the literature only in passing. Getz (2002) found that journalism students described their internship experiences in positive terms and recommended such experiences to peers.

Daugherty (1998) provides a thorough review of the literature available on journalism and mass communication students’ internships, the upshot of which is this: Commentaries on existing internship programs and arguments about the usefulness of internships far outweigh information about students’ actual experiences. Even this limited literature is subdivided into studies of public relations internships, advertising internships, broadcast internships, and print journalism internships. In fact, with the exception of Grimm’s extensive Web site for newspaper interns, the literature on newspaper internships is scant.

Nevertheless, Daugherty’s study of broadcast and public relations internships provides insight into concerns on both sides of the internship equation. Among the fears she found in

students, “coping with unfamiliarity in a fast-paced environment where people are ‘too busy for you’ was the emerging theme.” Similarly, “Trying to know what supervisors assume you should know already” was a challenge for one student because “sometimes they assume you know a lot when you don’t.”

Given the internship descriptions above, this theme is likely as to be true with newspaper interns as with the broadcast and public relations interns Daugherty surveyed. As Stanton and Ali (1982) found, “One of the greatest pitfalls of interns is a tendency to assume that supervisors know everything an intern is doing and how he or she feels about it. There is a propensity to see supervisors as all-seeing and superhuman” (48). Another insightful finding by Daugherty was how interns perceive supervisors and what characteristics they think make a supervisor helpful or not – the difference usually coming down to how much attention the intern is given. The trait supervisors most wanted to see in their interns was a strong work ethic, and the biggest challenge they said they faced in facilitating the internship was “making the time to ensure the intern is truly learning and growing from the experience rather than it being a part-time job.”

That distinction is no less than the heart of this thesis. The difference between an internship and a more generic summer job is in the educational component. This educational component includes both the application of knowledge and, through reflection and interaction, the creation of knowledge. The key words in the internship experience are *learning*, *doing*, and *reflecting*.

Newspaper internships take place in deadline-driven organizational settings. A newspaper’s emphasis is largely on *doing*, and it is well worth asking how that emphasis

affects internship experiences, particularly considering the transitional nature of internships and the fact that supervisors admit to finding difficulty in achieving the educational aspect.

Research Questions

This series of articles will explore the following questions:

1. Do students get a mix of learning, doing, and reflecting in summer internships at newspapers? If so, what is the breakdown of the mix, and how is it achieved?
2. To what extent do structural factors such as pay, location, newspaper size, school support and other considerations affect newspaper internship experiences from students' and editors' perspectives?
3. What are the disconnects, if any, between students' and newspapers' expectations of internship programs? How can these be remedied?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This thesis uses traditional newsgathering and news writing techniques to explore the research questions posed in the previous section. This section will explain the reporting method, describe the participants, preview the analysis techniques, propose publication outlets, and identify reflexivity issues for this thesis.

Reporting Method

Good interviewing requires skill, practice, and preparation (Yopp & McAdams, 2003). For this thesis, I used the conventional interviewing method outlined by Yopp and McAdams: Do research, obtain access, formulate questions, conduct the interview, and select the most useful information. I became familiar with each school and newspaper before I visited so I could ask questions relevant to my research questions. When appropriate, I allowed participants to guide the conversation toward aspects I might not have previously considered. The reporting piece fits into a larger process of writing the story: information gathering, thinking and planning, listing, drafting, rewriting, sharing, and polishing (Yopp & McAdams, 2003).

Participants

Because this series of articles deals with a narrow topic, it is important to use as wide an angle as possible to examine the topic. I tried to get the widest cross-section of internship experiences as time and money allowed. I visited the following schools to interview students

and career services personnel: DePaul University, Northwestern University, the University of Missouri at Columbia, and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. This represents a breadth of structural factors, including geographical diversity and school affiliation. Each of these schools has an award-winning student newspaper and/or an established journalism program.

On the industry side, the following newspapers were targeted for interviews with recruiters, intern coordinators, and editors who work with interns: *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Charlotte Observer*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *The Detroit Free Press*. These are all newspapers with renowned internship programs and editors who focus on recruitment. In addition, I e-mailed scores of newspapers to find out how many interns they are having this year, how many they had last year, how many applications they typically receive, and how much they pay their interns.

I also identified and interviewed an expert on internships and experiential learning.

Analysis

Journalism's power is in the dissemination of information. After collecting information, a reporter determines the angle and focus of the story (Yopp & McAdams, 2003). During the interview and concurrent drafting process, I constantly analyzed and scanned for important points and appropriate angles. As I interviewed students and industry professionals, common themes emerged, from which I formulated new questions for subsequent interviews. In the product of this thesis – a series of articles – the information I gleaned from interviews and research is distilled to a timely, informative, and publishable series.

Medium

This series of articles was created for a print publication. To target an audience of newspaper editors and recruiters as well as journalism educators and students, this series will be pitched to a trade publication. Appropriate venues for this series include *Columbia Journalism Review*, *American Journalism Review*, and *Editor & Publisher*.

Columbia Journalism Review is an especially appropriate venue because it aims to examine “not only day-to-day press performance but also the many forces — political, economic, technological, social, legal, and more — that affect that performance for better or worse” (CJR, 2005). The bimonthly magazine has a paid circulation of about 20,000, of whom 57 percent are newspaper professionals, and it accepts unsolicited queries. This series of articles would be helpful in the May/June issue, when newspapers and students are preparing for summer internship programs. All material for the May/June 2006 issue must be submitted by April 7, and the issue goes on sale May 1. I will query *Columbia Journalism Review* about the possibility of publication as soon as this thesis is approved.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity examines the researcher’s personal involvement in the topic at hand and explains how the researcher’s personal investment leads him or her to avoid or emphasize certain views (Gergen & Gergen, 2000). The source of my bias related to this thesis is my past work as a newspaper intern. I believe internship programs are the single most effective recruiting tool newspapers have and are therefore crucial to staff development. I also believe internship programs are students’ best option for exploring the field and “sampling” a variety of companies and locales. I have run the internship application gantlet three times. My first internship was at the Macon (Ga.) Telegraph and was arranged through the Dow Jones

Newspaper Fund internship program. My second internship was at the Oregonian, and my third internship will be at the Washington Post. For each of those internships, I have dozens of rejection letters to show. Because of my experiences, I am invested in optimizing the internship experience for newspapers and students, hence, my interest in this topic for my thesis.

Strengths

The greatest strength of this study is its potential to contribute to the body of information available to student journalists who are seeking newspaper internships. In the literature reviewed above, I found little practical information beyond tip lists for applicants. This series of articles illuminates the internship experience from both the students' and newspapers' perspectives, and it addresses disconnects between those views. If I secure publication of these articles in a trade journal, the information I gather will be equally available to and accessible by industry professionals, career services administrators and students.

Limitations

Limitations for this project include presenting a story that is broad enough to be useful to the average student or industry professional. On one hand, it was important to find enough shared experiences and ideas to be useful for my audience. On the other hand, even when examining a small piece of a small business, the anecdotes and experiences are innumerable. As with all news stories, this thesis succeeds only to the extent that it provides the reader with useful information in a clear and concise way. With more time and resources, a much larger population could be sampled and mined for data to examine the concrete payoff of internships. As the lack of literature shows, this area is under-researched, and the

internal research done by newspapers (internship evaluations, for example), is proprietary information. Despite these limitations, I believe this thesis contributes to the information available about newspaper internships.

CHAPTER IV

THE BROAD MIX OF NEWSPAPER INTERNSHIPS

Internships are critical for students jumping into the job market, but it's increasingly difficult for students to find those jobs as newspapers cut back their internship programs.

Add to that earlier deadlines to make those hiring decisions, the difficulty students say they have in finding information about internships online, persistent diversity issues and the pressure to stand out among hundreds of applicants, and the process can freak out even the most dedicated young journalist.

"Having internships, in this day and age, is imperative," said Phou Sengsavanh, assistant director of career services at the University of Missouri. "It's not a résumé enhancer; it's a necessity."

That necessity – already a fiercely sought after prize – is in short supply this year because many papers continue to cut intern positions or entire intern programs for financial reasons. Recent ownership changes at newspapers and the overall decline of available newspaper jobs aren't helping the situation. The Chicago Tribune, the Oregonian and the Cincinnati Enquirer are among the papers that will not have summer interns, slashing the number of spots available nationally by 35. In a process where less than 5 percent of internship applicants to many major papers will be successful, that's a big hit.

The impact of that hit is not lessened by its wide distribution. Students who can't find an internship miss out on a valuable training opportunity. Universities suffer when their

students don't get a chance to apply the theory they've been taught. Newspapers lose the chance to evaluate prospective employees and cover all that summer vacation without paying overtime.

Students, universities and newspapers understand the benefits, but they agree that internships are harder than ever to get. Savvy students also realize that different papers offer different experiences: Expectations, training and pay vary dramatically. Newspapers' emphasis on diversity varies as well, and where it is strong, minority and non-minority students sometimes question the hiring process. With fewer spots available this year than usual, tensions are high.

Supply and Demand

Recruiters say this is one of the tightest years in recent memory for internships. "Normally I would have chosen and announced my interns by mid-December," said Tribune recruiter Shelia Solomon, who usually chooses 10 paid summer interns from an applicant pool of more than 2,000. "It would be behind me. But the hiring freeze last year and this year has gotten in the way of that."

In Cincinnati, this summer will be the second in a row without interns, and this year is the second time in four years the Oregonian has cut its program. The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer had 12 interns in 2005; this year, it will host six. The Los Angeles Times has 10 slots this year, compared with last year's 14, and Knight Ridder's corporate internships are gone. Students have noticed the shift in hiring practices.

"It seems like it's just a bad year for newspapers," said Jenna Johnson, a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "Newspapers that would usually hire five or six are just

hiring one or two. I mean, if you're looking at Knight Ridder, don't even bother applying. It's a really big issue."

Jim Walser is the senior editor for staff development at one of those Knight Ridder papers, the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer. When he got involved with the Observer's internship program 20 years ago, the paper offered eight or nine paid summer internships.

"The last couple of years, because of Knight Ridder's situation and our own budget situation, we've had almost no purely paid Charlotte Observer internships," Walser said.

"What we've done is sought out partnerships with universities." Each of the four students interning at the Observer this summer will be affiliated with or funded by a non-newspaper source: the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation and the University of North Carolina's M.S. Van Hecke Award.

"We're having to look at the cost of it," Walser said, "and that's a real shame, because I think internships are incredibly valuable for the business, they're valuable for the individual, they're valuable for the university.

"It's one of the downsides of papers saving the relative pennies that they save by cutting out internships," he continued. "It saves us 5,000 bucks to cut a 10-week internship. And we would rather save that 5,000 bucks than lay off somebody."

The dwindling number of internships has only magnified the increase in applications. "Journalism school enrollment is up," observed Detroit Free Press recruiter Joe Grimm. This year, Grimm fielded 500 applicants for four of the most competitive internship spots in journalism. The Boston Globe got 950 applications for 17 spots. Students' chances were actually better this year at the Washington Post, where 500 applicants vied for 22 positions, than at the Birmingham News, where seven out of 300 candidates were successful.

Most students apply to more than one paper, so a newspaper that picks its interns early increases the odds for applicants at other papers. But that doesn't mean everyone is finding a place to work. Grimm said he knew a student who sent out 120 applications to small papers without any luck. More commonly, a student will send out 20 to 30 applications, though a batch that size may not yield results.

"I have a lot of friends that are extremely, extremely talented journalists that can't find an internship for the summer just because there really aren't that many," Nebraska student Jenna Johnson said.

"With newsrooms cutting staff, you'd think that they'd try to compensate for that a little by bringing in a couple more interns, but instead they're just cutting [programs] all together. This is the generation that they're going to need to be filling those reporting slots," she added.

As a secondary benefit, internships are valuable to universities as an admission tool, said Scott Winter, who recruits for Nebraska's journalism school. "If internships dry up, it's going to be a big blow to places like us, because to get them to come out to Lincoln, Neb., is a hell of a feat anyway," he said. "But internships are my wild card – that we're sending kids to New York, we're sending them to Denver, we're sending them all over."

Winter also has an industry perspective. As an editor at the Bismarck (N.D.) Tribune, he saw the difference interns could make in a newsroom. "Often our interns wrote the best stories," he said. "Unquestionably. Because they weren't limited to some paradigm of what some story should be, like grizzly reporters were. If a concert was coming to town, instead of just talking to the publicist and doing a who, what, where, when kind of story like the regular

entertainment reporter would do, this kid would be really excited about talking to Trent Reznor.

“They don’t know what they’re supposed to do, so they do everything. Seven bucks an hour, and they’re getting section front stories or getting on the front page on a Saturday night when they had to be the night reporter,” Winter said. “That’s a hell of a deal for a newspaper that’s shutting down internships.”

The Diversity Factor

Even where internships are available, the competition is intense. When a recruiter has 1,000 applications for 10 internships, she can be pretty picky. A perfect cover letter, a flawless résumé and killer clips are the bare minimum for consideration. As internships dwindle, some students are on edge about what gives them – or their competition – an edge.

“A lot of the non-minority students feel as if the minority students have an advantage, and of course the minority students don’t feel like they do have an advantage, just because a lot of them feel they have more to prove,” said Sengsavanh from her career services office at Missouri.

“I think for the most part there is this common misconception that minority students have just the minority status and they’re not qualified. That’s not true, because when you’re recruiting, I’ve seen plenty of well-qualified minorities not get positions,” she added.

Madison Park, a recent graduate of Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, noted: “A lot of non-minority people ... seem to have this underlying feeling that it’s reverse discrimination, that they’re not getting these internships or jobs or getting into these programs because they’re white,” she said. “And that all these newspapers are looking

for minority kids and if they're not one of them, they're not going to get a prestigious internship.

"I think it's bullhonkey, but I actually hear it a lot."

A number of journalism programs, internships and scholarships are aimed specifically at minority students. "For a white kid to get an internship is really, really tough," said Winter, who focuses heavily on raising minority enrollment at Nebraska's journalism school. "In terms of internships, a minority student who is performing well has a really good shot.

"I'm not going to discount the quality of their work. Every single one of our minorities is doing great work, but it just shows what minorities can do if they get in this field. They've pretty much gotten every internship they've gone after," he noted.

That can be a tough thing to hear for a non-minority student who is also doing good work but has a harder time getting internships. Nebraska junior Johnson said: "It's nothing against minority students because everyone that's gotten an internship is qualified for that internship and has worked really hard for that internship. But a lot of times there are people just as qualified who have a lot more experience who just aren't getting internships at all."

Johnson was reminded of the need for diversity when she saw she was the only female daytime intern at her last internship. "It's a hard thing to juggle," she said. "That can kind of be kind of a tension point. You hear snide comments here and there, which is really disappointing, just because it shouldn't be like that."

For some, the issue is felt more than heard.

"It's not explicitly said to me or to my fellow minority journalism students," Park said of her time at Medill, "but it's been said to some of my friends. When we talk about it

sometimes, it's like, yes, I totally get that feeling, like how did you get X, Y, Z when I didn't get X, Y, Z?"

Park noted that non-minority students might be frustrated that "it's these big names like the L.A. Times that have a program specifically for minorities. If the Bucktown Courier had a program specifically for minorities, I don't think there'd be too much fuss about it."

Atlanta Journal-Constitution recruiter Sarah Hicks knows minority recruitment is a delicate balance. "You do have to work hard at creating a diverse pool of candidates," she said. "You have to be thinking about that all the time. How am I going to bring a diverse mixture of people to this group? And what do you do to do that?"

One way Hicks and other recruiters attract a diverse applicant pool is by making the summer round of conventions. "If you look at my year," Hicks said, "if I went to the NABJ, NAHJ, AAJA and the gay and lesbian gathering in September, I am probably going to come out of those four conventions with a good short list of potential intern candidates."

Despite non-minority students' unhappiness about what they see as a somewhat skewed system, recruiters will continue to seek out minority students who know to network at conventions or apply to targeted programs. Part of that focus comes from a push to diversify the industry as a whole. According to a survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, in 2004, 13.42 percent of working journalists in the United States were minorities. "The number of minority interns increased by nearly a hundred to 948 or 33.2 percent of all interns hired in summer 2004," the report said. "This is the largest number of minority interns since 2001."

Grimm, who has an ethnicity column in the database he keeps of internship applicants, said: "I don't think the Detroit Free Press should really have a summer when it

doesn't have an African-American male as an intern. I'd also like to have an African-American woman, I'd also like to see a Hispanic person, I'd like to see an Arab-American person, I like to see men and women. And I'd like to see about half the people from here and half the people from not here. As you go through the process, each decision influences a later decision."

The diversity push has a flip side: Minority students who do land prestigious internships or receive multiple offers may wonder whether they are earning the attention because of talent – or race. Grimm said he hears minority students say, "'Am I as good as that guy? I hate that I felt that way because I know I went to a great school and I've worked really hard and I've had three internships, but I had that doubt. I know I shouldn't feel that way, but I did.' [The feeling of insecurity] doesn't go away."

At the Journal-Constitution, Hicks is quick to reassure students. "You've got 500 résumés sitting in front of you, and these are good students. I actually think that the skill level [of the applicants regardless of race] is very similar. I sort of have to stop myself – you could choose 50 of them who are phenomenal."

Expensive Experience

As sensitive as it is, racial diversity is at least visible on the recruitment radar. Socioeconomic status as a factor in internship hiring is more subtle, and the relative dearth of newspaper internships available this year exacerbates the economic realities of the summer internship search.

A summer internship, even one that is paid, can be an expensive undertaking. A student with more resources is likely to launch a wider search, substantially increasing his or

her chances of adding an internship to the résumé. Next year, that student will have an edge when looking for another internship or a job.

“I’ve gone through \$20 or \$30 with just two or three applications,” said University of Missouri senior Diego Sorbara. Between postage and photocopying, applying for 20 internships – a number Detroit Free Press recruiter Joe Grimm says is common – easily costs \$100.

“I sometimes misuse copiers here because I’m a student and I’m poor and I don’t want to go to Kinko’s again and get into any further debt,” Sorbara said.

Jenna Johnson used the same tactic. “I did a lot of copying here at work, but you buy the résumé paper, which is a good 10 bucks there. You buy the envelopes. It costs two bucks to mail each one. I bet mine was probably 60 to 80 bucks.”

From the outset, candidate pools can be limited by economic means. “Students of privilege tend to be the ones who know the game,” said Sengsavanh.

Beyond the cost of applying, a student’s family circumstances may shape his or her internship possibilities. Some students can swing an unpaid internship only by living at home; others can rely on parental support for a cross-country move. As a result, those who can afford to take an internship with little or no pay build experience.

Walser has seen how that works. A few years ago, a student “pretty much begged me” for an unpaid internship, he said. Walser obliged, and the student’s parents kicked in money for housing and meals. “His parents were willing to throw him some extra money because they knew it would probably pay off, and it did. So how do you do that for a poor kid? It’s very hard to make that work.”

Unpaid internships typically mean students get academic credit, but that's hardly compensation.

"We do offer credit for internships, but I try to discourage that because then students have to pay for the experience," said Sengsavanh. "It's a Catch-22 because a lot of the students who don't have the money and have to work summer jobs to pay this year's tuition bill can't find time to take those internships. You're leaving a lot of students out due to economics."

Joe Grimm agreed. "A university will charge you three credit hours so that you can get credit for your internship," he said. "Did they earn the money? No."

Even among paid internships, all are not created equal. Dow Jones Newspaper Fund business reporting and copy editing interns at the News & Observer receive \$350 a week. A copy editing intern at the Washington Post makes \$925 a week. N&O reporting interns earn \$500 a week; Post reporting interns get \$825.

An intern at the Buffalo News makes \$390 a week. An intern at the (Cleveland) Plain Dealer gets \$692 a week plus some impressive benefits.

"I know somebody who got her teeth fixed in Cleveland last summer because she had health insurance," Grimm said.

Grimm's paper helps the income situation by providing interns with cars to use on assignment. "Not everybody can rent a car," he said. "That keeps out the poor people. They have to say, hey, this is no joke. I don't have any money. My parents don't have any money. I'm barely making school. How can I get a car? Sorry, I have to turn down your internship."

That situation has come up in Atlanta. "We had to walk away from the idea of doing an internship [with one woman] simply because she didn't have a car. So it does sometimes

get down to that moment of, well, the economics just doesn't work out for you, even though long term would it have been good for her? Yes, it would have been."

Madison Park has dealt with the rental car issue. "If I'm from California and I'm going to work in Raleigh, I'm going to have to rent one, because I'm not going to drive my parents' car from California, and I don't have a car. That gets expensive."

The other major expense – and, often, a major source of stress – for summer interns is housing. "Everyone wants to go to Austin because they pay you and they subsidize your housing," Park said.

Married Missouri student Bob Britten was looking for a good graphics internship last year, and he found one at the Seattle Times. Pay "was one of the things I looked for," he said. Interns at the Times make \$525 a week.

"Still, we came out behind because we were paying rent on two apartments," he said. "We weren't crippled by it. But that was a tricky part of it. We talked about sub-leasing to recoup some of that, but we weren't crazy about the idea of someone living in our house for a summer that we'd never met before. And it's a tough market."

Grimm said he knows it's tough to sublease in a college town, but people do it. "How much should we pay people to cover two apartments and health insurance? I tell them what their take-home pay will be. I'm not embarrassed that we pay students \$541 a week to work for us."

The economic strain of renting an apartment in two towns is compounded by the emotional strain of moving to a new city and committing to housing sight unseen.

Diego Sorbara's housing situation in Hartford didn't help him acclimate to his temporary home. Knowing he would be working the night shift, Sorbara signed on to live with a photographer about four blocks from the shop.

"One of the first nights I was there," he said, "they had me edit a graphic. It was a full-page map of metro Hartford with little stars placed on where there were shootings. White stars for nonfatal, black stars for fatal, and there were about three white stars either on my block or a block or two from where I lived. So I was pretty freaked out about where I lived."

Grimm has heard even worse stories. "I talked to one person who moved into a trailer that had been owned by a guy who had a dog, and the trailer was infested with fleas. When she complained to the editor, they just laughed at her and said, 'Last summer's intern lived in his car. What are you complaining about?'"

While he doesn't control where his interns live, Grimm said he tries to keep an eye on it. "We try to give them good advice so they don't end up in an icky place," he said. "There have been horror stories of interns who have ended up in horrible situations because the editors wouldn't take any time out. They just said, oh, find a place."

When they can afford to be, students are savvy about what 10 weeks of Ramen noodles can do for their career. Johnson bunked with a local family when she interned at the Norfolk (Neb.) Daily News after her first year of college. She made about \$7 an hour.

"It was the experience for that one," she said, laughing. "Once you factor out living expenses and food and gas money and things like that, getting an internship isn't going to make you rich."

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT: WHERE TO GO FOR INFORMATION

Knowing that internships are a critical factor in finding a job after graduation, journalism students are on the hunt early for information about what newspapers want. A handful of papers have clear links to internship information, while many bury the guidelines or requirements on their Web sites. Some rely primarily on face-to-face meetings at conventions, despite the fact that most students start their searches online. Many students say finding internship information for newspapers is a constant source of frustration.

“The application [information] is almost always really, really difficult to find,” Missouri graduate student Bob Britten said. “It’s almost never easy to find through the Web site. You really have to dig to ... ferret this stuff out.”

Missouri senior and application veteran Diego Sorbara agreed. “I would always have questions and really it’s even hard to find out who to call or who to contact with questions,” he said.

Someone interested in interning at the Birmingham (Ala.) News, for example, might type “Birmingham News internship” into an Internet search engine and find listings on the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Web site and the University of California-Berkeley’s internship page. More than a dozen online descriptions of the Birmingham internship program direct

prospective applicants to assistant managing editor Randy Henderson. Henderson died in February.

Other newspapers request that students apply to their human resources department. In the case of the San Francisco Chronicle, not even a name, telephone number or e-mail address is given as a contact.

“The places should list clearer definitions of interns and dates and deadlines and who interns should call if they have questions,” Missouri senior Graham Johnston said. “We might be scared to call up the editor of a publication we don’t know because editors are always pissed off and busy.”

While many if not most students conduct their internship searches exclusively online, newspapers put considerable resources into conveying internship information in person. “We tend to plug the internship program all year round,” said Sarah Hicks, news personnel manager for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. “You really are sort of drumming up business all year long, just to make people aware of it. I certainly do that at the conventions; in the fall, though, I go to a specific college and spend a day just talking to potential interns.”

Talking to a dozen students in one day, however, can’t compare with the reach of a detailed and easily found Web page. Hicks’ paper, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, complements her shoe-leather recruiting with just such a site, but few newspapers have such an organized cyber presence.

“Probably Austin is the best paper that really explains what the interns do,” Sorbara said. “With most, it’s just a vague notion that, oh, you’re going to be an intern here. They don’t really explain what the process entails other than how long it’s going to be.”

Atlanta and Austin's Web sites exhibit all of the characteristics that students say they like to see in internship listings. First, they are hard to miss. If you Google "Austin American-Statesman internship" or "Atlanta Journal-Constitution internship," the first hit links to a newspaper-generated Web page specifically about the internship program, rather than a database listing or a school's career services page.

Second, good internship listings give details. Students want to know exactly when internships start, how long they last, how much they pay, how fierce the competition is, what positions are available and what perks the program offers. Perks range from mentoring to housing to dental coverage.

Non-reporting interns face additional challenges in finding information.

"Sometimes they'll go into a great deal of information for their reporting candidates, and they'll really gloss over the fact that they have copy editors, too," Sorbara said. "They'll say, 'We offer reporting in city government, minority affairs, education, features.' And then they'll say and copy editing and photography, which is like, great, you value us that much less. A bunch of times they just don't explain what you can do. Can I do news copy editing? Can I be a features copy editor? Can I be a sports copy editor? Will I get to do design? They're just very vague."

Finding internship details falls on the student, both recruiters and students agreed, and some students said they think their peers aren't working hard enough to find out about opportunities. "They'll sign up to see the recruiter, but that's all they do," University of Missouri student Conning Chu said. "They let the school do the work for them. They don't do their own research, they don't look at other internships, they don't know what papers they would really like to intern at. They don't know anything about the internships."

“I was looking online all the time. I know where I want to go,” she added. “But most people don’t. If you don’t have that motivation, you’re not going to get an internship.”

Johnston takes an optimistic view of the difficulty in finding internship information. “Maybe that’s their recruiting tactic,” he said. “If you can’t find it, you’re not a good journalist.”

CHAPTER VI

DEADLINE PRESSURE: APPLYING EARLY AND OFTEN

In the life of a journalism student, the internship calendar is at least as important as the academic calendar. Diego Sorbara, a senior at the University of Missouri, described on his blog the anxiety of the annual newspaper internship mating dance as “a freak-out that has stretched itself slowly into a week-long panic attack.”

When applying to colleges, students watch the acceptances and rejections roll in before they have to make a decision. With internships, it’s not quite that simple. A student may send out 20 applications and get an offer before hearing from 17 of the others. That student may also feel pressure from a recruiter eager to nail down his or her intern list.

“If they do get offered something pretty early, they have this dilemma of should I take it or should I hold out for something better?” Missouri junior Conning Chu said.

Given the fierce competition for internships, especially in the current economic climate, the maxim about a bird in the hand may seem like an obvious answer, but internships are business decisions for students, too.

Laura Girresch was happy to score a gig at the Belleville News-Democrat last summer, but she faced the challenges of a small paper.

“I didn’t have my own computer, desk or phone,” she said. “It’s not very professional to say, well, you can try me back at any of these four numbers.”

Would holding out for a bigger paper with more resources have helped? Maybe, she said. “I still think it was a great experience. It was just a little unorganized and by the fly.”

The matching process is complicated by the fact that application deadlines vary wildly, even among similar-size newspapers, and they have been creeping earlier in the fall for years.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution recruiter Sarah Hicks lost some candidates with a Dec. 1 deadline. “I’m actually going to move it to Nov. 15,” she said, “partially because an unscientific survey of other papers has shown me that many, many, many people are making their choices and they’re already done by Dec. 1. If you get into the Christmas holiday, people have already made their choices. The interns have other offers.”

Getting an offer in October or November, while heartening, can cause more worry than joy, at least initially. Chu received an early offer last fall. “It was between take this one and possibly miss out on something better or still dig around and maybe not get anything,” she said. “So I ended up taking it.”

In some cases, students are given only a day or two to make their decisions. Chicago Tribune recruiter Sheila Solomon gives students a week, but understands the logic of the quick deadlines.

“In most instance, the reason why I won’t give you more than a week is because I’m going to lose somebody else,” she said. “I’m going right to my No. 2, and I need to be able to that quickly because there are a lot of people who want to be interns and not as many who are as prepared to be as successful as some others. And there are a lot of us, comparatively speaking, going after those few.”

When she advises students who come into Missouri's career services office, Phou Sengsavanh sees the toll early deadlines and early offers can take. "Pressure tactics [are] not uncommon," she said. "For the newspaper industry, at least with the recruiters, if they want somebody, they will try to get them because they know everybody else will want that person, too."

Sometimes that means a paper will have an intern picked a year in advance. Sengsavanh said that illustrates the need for students to apply early and apply often. "This is where getting contacts and information early on helps you plan your moves," she said. "I'm not trying to say it's all a game, but to some extent, it is. And the more information you have, the better you can figure out what works for you and what doesn't."

A student fielding multiple offers should be frank, Solomon said. "They should be honest. They should be very honest with us as recruiters. They should be honest enough to say, gee, I really appreciated that offer, I'm waiting to hear from so-and-so, or I've heard from so-and-so and now they've given me however much time to make a decision."

For the students, it comes down to a gamble. "You have to weigh, what internships do I actually have a good chance of getting?" Chu said. "I'm not talking about a 50 or 60 percent chance. I mean an 80 percent chance of getting. And if I were to get them, would they be better than the offer I already got? You have to be very, very honest with yourself."

CHAPTER VII

INTERNSHIP PHILOSOPHIES: THE DISCONNECT IN EXPECTATIONS

Academic research has found that internships pay off tangibly in higher starting salaries for recent journalism graduates and that students hold more realistic views of their skills after they complete internships. Experiential education advocates say that nothing solidifies classroom learning like practical application.

But a couple of sample listings immediately show even the biggest newspapers in the country have very different perspectives on what an internship involves:

- Our internship program seeks college juniors, seniors, and graduate students who thrive in a “sink or swim” atmosphere. This is not a classroom situation. The emphasis is on doing, not teaching. Applicants must have at least one previous internship at a daily newspaper other than college. We set the same high performance standards for interns as we do for our regular staff members. We do not have make-work, trivial “intern assignments.” Tribune interns must be able to – and often do – cover major stories their first few days on the job. (From the Chicago Tribune)
- The Times offers hands-on journalism work experience. However, little training is provided, so previous newspaper internship experience is preferable. (From the Los Angeles Times)
- The first week of the internship is an orientation program to New York City and the newsroom. (From the New York Times)
- During the first week, we have a welcome lunch to introduce interns to senior editors, a daylong bus tour of the Washington metropolitan area and computer training. We also have seminars on surviving the summer, legal and libel issues, and newsroom online operations. Weekly lunches with

senior editors and reporters as guest speakers enhance understanding of The Washington Post and the industry. (From the Washington Post)

Tribune recruiter Sheila Solomon explains her paper's stance. "We really do expect that on day two you will be given an assignment and you will be able to do the assignment, and it may be a page one story, you never know," she said. "And that's by virtue of experience that we've seen you've had from your prior internships and my conversations with those editors who edited you in the past."

That's not to say interns aren't cared for. "Even though we don't call this a teaching program, I know as a senior editor that you are still in the learning phase, I mean very much so," Solomon said. "Not that the rest of us aren't, but you definitely are. And so I'm going to be paying attention while you're here."

Interns don't have a formal educational component at the Detroit Free Press, either. "They just came out of college," recruiter Joe Grimm said. "They don't want to spend the summer sitting around with a bunch of editors who think they're professors. They just got done with it."

Not so, said Karen Roloff, director of the communications department internship program at DePaul University and president of the National Society for Experiential Education. "In terms of being given assignments and having to conform to standards and having to really pass muster, they would be learning and progressing and that's good," Roloff said. "And through the experience of writing and having some editor rip it up, they would be learning. Almost learning by accident. That's probably not the best way to learn."

"Experiential education really says that the learning is enhanced and solidified when the learner can step back and think about it and reflect on it as opposed to continuing to plow through," she added.

At some newspapers, that opportunity to reflect comes in the form of weekly seminars or brownbag lunches. Jenna Johnson, a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, encountered just such a program at the Omaha World-Herald last summer. “The investigative reporter came in and talked about heading out on some of these dangerous assignments and things she did to protect herself while reporting,” Johnson said. “The cops reporter talked about ways to get police reports they don’t want you to have. We had a business reporter come in and teach us basic statistics to make sure we don’t screw up numbers when we’re calculating things for stories.

“Some interns will kind of drag their feet about it, but I thought that was really, really well done. I learned a lot from it,” she said.

Recruiters and editors can learn from those gatherings, too. “It’s a great opportunity to do a little bit of generic brainstorming,” said Atlanta Journal-Constitution recruiter Sarah Hicks, who organizes a luncheon every Tuesday for her interns. “It’s more of a check-in time because I’ve realized that the 10-week internship goes so fast that even if you’re just working a normal 40-hour shift, as an intern, you’re taking in so much information that you need time to process it.”

Still, one size doesn’t fit all. Diego Sorbara was a Dow Jones Newspaper Fund copy editing intern last summer at the Hartford Courant. “The intern program was geared more toward the reporting interns, which was frustrating, because it was held on a Tuesday, my day off, and at noon, which is usually when I wake up,” he said. “They would bring in a speaker from the paper. A reporter, sometimes an editor. Never a designer or copy editor, so you could tell it was really geared toward people who wrote. I mainly went because they had free lunch, and it was good food.”

For students making their first foray into the working world, knowing what questions to ask can be hard, but the more informed they are, the better the internship is likely to be for both the student and the newspaper.

“Internship is a word like jabberwocky,” Roloff said. “It can mean whatever you want it to mean.”

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION: REMEDIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The students, faculty and university staff members interviewed for this thesis are all at highly regarded journalism programs. In such programs, significant resources are spent informing students about internships, preparing them for interviews, and facilitating one-on-one interviews with newspaper recruiters. Similarly, the recruiters interviewed are from papers that have a full-time position devoted to recruitment and staff development, and each of these individuals devotes a substantial part of his or her year specifically to an internship program. Thus, the sources used in this thesis a limited and fairly similar perspective of the internship process.

Despite this, the information contained here can be useful to students at any college or university, even those that do not have journalism programs, and to newspapers of all sizes, even those that do not have recruiters. Any student would benefit from knowing how competitive journalism internships are and how much they vary in structure and compensation. This information could even serve as a wake-up call to students who are apathetic toward their internship searches. For a copy chief or city editor charged with selecting a group of interns – on top of his or her regular duties – knowing that internship application deadlines are moving ever earlier and that students are weighing issues like pay and housing in their internship searches could help change the way the selection process is

handled. On a small but significant scale, any employee at any newspaper could read this thesis, note student concerns about compensation and the availability of information about internships, then propose changes to the paper's internship Web site and/or adjust the intern pay scale, to attract a stronger group of applicants.

Awareness – and even better – change would be the greatest outcome of this project. This thesis put forth a series of research questions with the hope of finding not only insight into but also new ideas for newspaper internships.

To that extent, the research proved successful and answered the research questions:

1. Do students get a mix of learning, doing, and reflecting in summer internships at newspapers? If so, what is the breakdown of the mix, and how is it achieved?
2. To what extent do structural factors such as pay, location, newspaper size, school support and other considerations affect newspaper internship experiences from students' and editors' perspectives?
3. What are the disconnects, if any, between students' and newspapers' expectations of internship programs? How can these be remedied?

Time and money will always limit what newspapers can do, and both will limit what students do. The following ideas, gleaned from the interviews, are meant to go beyond awareness and inspire change.

- Newspapers should realize that many students conduct their internship searches almost exclusively online and should tailor their Web sites accordingly. An Internet search for “Jonestown Herald internship” should produce a thoughtful, detailed, and visually appealing page produced by the Jonestown Herald. That page should include as many specifics as possible about the internship program. How much will students be paid? Is

housing subsidized? How long is the program, and what are the start and end dates? How many applications are usually received? How many positions are available? What beats are available for reporters and what specializations are available for editors, photographers, and designers? When are hiring decisions made? The more information, the better.

- Newspapers should also be clear about what they want from students. “Six to 10 clips” is not always a useful phrase. From reporters, does the paper want to see mostly breaking news? Feature stories? Raw copy? From copy editors, do they want six headlines or six fully edited stories? “Before” and “after” versions? Front-page packages? Local copy? The answer is usually a combination, but newspaper recruiters can be clear about what they want to see in the combination. Beyond clips, a cover letter, résumé, and references should be enough. If letters of recommendation are requested, specifics about whom to ask for a letter – faculty members, campus newspaper editors, professional newspaper editors, or longtime family friends – are helpful.

- Each paper should have someone responsible for recruiting or at least designated as the go-to person for internship information. A full-time recruiter is a luxury few newspapers can afford, but even a small paper can give an editor a half-day off to visit a local university or community college. Good recruiters help attract the best applicants. Over time, students build relationships with recruiters and may apply to papers they wouldn’t otherwise have considered based on a personal interaction. Editors should make sure the newspaper’s recruiter understands his or her role. Recruiters should show respect and keep students in the loop. To the extent possible, newspapers should keep applicants informed of where they are in the process, when finalists will be chosen, when interviews will be conducted, and when selections will be made. Most students send out dozens if not scores of applications, and they

are trying to find the best internship they can. They have questions. They want to be interviewed and given a chance to ask those questions. Again, to the extent possible, they want to know why they were or were not chosen. Recruiters can also help students learn to negotiate the interview process by offering tips about appropriate dress, advice on what materials to bring to an interview, and perhaps even a list of their pet peeves.

- Once a newspaper selects its intern class, a few simple things can help make the experience a good one. Recruiters or editors should know where interns are living. In many cases, students move to an unfamiliar city to do an internship, and they may have to arrange their housing sight unseen. If the newspaper is not providing housing, say, at a local university, it should at least ensure that students are in safe and affordable places. A student paying rent in his or her college town may not be able to afford a suitable apartment for an internship. Editors and intern coordinators should also be sensitive to the difficulty of living alone in an unfamiliar city. Inviting an intern to a yoga class or a movie goes a long way. As University of Missouri senior Diego Sorbara said: “I loved the job, but I was pretty miserable when I wasn’t working. There’s only so much you can do by yourself.”

- Optimize the internship experience by providing as much stability as is possible in a newsroom. An intern who can spend the entire summer at one desk with a computer and a phone is going to feel more settled in his or her job, particularly when he or she may be working under several different editors during a vacation-laden summer internship. Give them the same days off every week, and leave them on the same desk. Jim Walser, a recruiter for the Charlotte Observer, learned the hard way after he said he “really screwed up” with the first group of interns he oversaw by constantly moving them around. “We owe them not to jerk them around,” he said. “To give them an honest chance to succeed by putting them

somewhere they can get their feet under them and learn some names and learn how the system works and learn how to go about getting a story and learn what their editors' idiosyncrasies are. It's hard to learn a newsroom."

- Finally, feedback, feedback, feedback. Students crave attention. They want to know what they're doing right, what they're doing wrong and what aren't doing that they should. Matching interns with mentors is a great way for them to have some consistency and have an intermediary who can pass along those kinds of messages. Group meetings of the interns can be a place to brainstorm about techniques and compare experiences. Tom Warhover, a professor at the University of Missouri, suggested setting up a reading club for interns and having staff writers drop in. "It doesn't always have to be the hierarchy that's doing the coaching and mentoring," he said. At smaller papers, he said, newspapers in a chain can pool resources and set up an iChat videoconference among interns or contract out the coaching/mentoring job to a local professor either in person or online.

Students can also follow some strategies to be proactive in landing internships:

- First and foremost, students should apply early and apply often. There is no logic to what newspapers want. A student who is rejected by a dozen newspapers may well end up as an intern at the Washington Post. The best applicants are aggressive about finding out what's available, so students should do plenty of research and double-check the information they find online.
- Students should involved with organizations like the National Association of Black Journalists, the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, the Society of Professional Journalists, or the American Copy Editors Society. They should attend their conventions for a serious advantage in networking with recruiters and editors.

- Once an internship is secured, a student should study maps of the new city and start reading the newspaper.
- Students should negotiate some kind of mentorship even before arriving at the newspaper. Students can also coordinate videoconference feedback sessions with a journalism professor back home. “I did a hard edit with my son in which I had his face on the left side of the screen, his story in the middle of the screen, and a keyboard instant messaging on the right, so he would write a sentence and say, ‘Does this look right?’” Missouri professor Warhover said. “And I’d see his face when I’d say, ‘No, that’s awful.’ You know, you’d get that personal relationship.”

Ultimately, there is no formula and there are few rules when it comes to newspaper internships. While this thesis reinforces that internships are essential to students, colleges, and newspapers, it also underlines the need for further research in this area. A more comprehensive survey of students, recruiters, and campus career services personnel could yield more comprehensive data on the state of newspaper internships; of particular interest would be the business side as to the cost and benefits of providing or participating in internship programs.

Table 1:
Internship Competition for Summer 2006*

Newspaper	Number of applicants for summer 2006	Internships spots available in 2006	Percent of applicants hired for summer 2006
Hartford Courant	80	20	25
The Buffalo News	75 to 100	14	16
St. Petersburg Times	350 to 400	20 to 22	5.6
The Arizona Republic, Phoenix	300	16	5.33
The Orange County Register, Santa Ana	175 to 200	10	5.33
The Honolulu Advertiser	100	5	5
The Washington Post	450 to 500	22	4.63
San Antonio Express- News	200	9	4.5
Tulsa World	200	9	4.5
The News & Observer, Raleigh	150	6	4
San Francisco Chronicle	more than 100	4	<4
The Courier-Journal, Louisville	200	7	3.5
Houston Chronicle	more than 200	7	<3.5
Star Tribune, Minneapolis	400	12	3
The Denver Post	350	10	2.86
The Virginian-Pilot	300 to 500	12	2.66
The Fresno Bee	114	3	2.63
The Birmingham News	300	7	2.33

Orlando Sentinel	300	7	2.33
The Plain Dealer, Cleveland	400	9	2.25
The Tampa Tribune	300	6	2
The Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City	more than 200	4	<2
Los Angeles Times	more than 500	10	<2
The Seattle Times	400 to 600	8 to 10	1.8
The Boston Globe	950	17	1.79
The News Journal, Wilmington	500	7	1.4
The Blade, Toledo	300	4	1.33
Seattle Post- Intelligencer	150 to 300	2 to 4	1.33
Detroit Free Press	more than 500	4	<.08

*The information for this table was obtained by e-mailing about 80 of the 100 highest-circulation newspapers in the United States on March 13, 2006. Newspapers that responded by this thesis' due date are listed.

Table 2:
Internship Pay for Summer 2006*

Newspaper	Weekly salary for interns
The Washington Post	\$825 to \$925
The Plain Dealer, Cleveland	\$692
The Boston Globe	\$675
Star Tribune, Minneapolis	\$673
The Arizona Republic, Phoenix	\$650
Los Angeles Times	\$600
The Virginian-Pilot	\$575
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	\$550
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution	\$550
Orlando Sentinel	\$525
The Seattle Times	\$525
The Blade, Toledo	\$512
San Antonio Express-News	\$500
The Charlotte Observer	\$500
The Denver Post	\$500
The Tampa Tribune	\$480
Tulsa World	\$480
The Courier-Journal, Louisville	\$475
The News Journal, Wilmington	\$475

The Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City	\$475
The Fresno Bee	\$450
St. Petersburg Times	\$450
The Orange County Register, Santa Ana	\$425
The Birmingham News	\$400
The Buffalo News	\$390

*The information for this table was obtained by e-mailing about 80 of the 100 highest-circulation newspapers in the United States on March 13, 2006. Newspapers that responded by this thesis' due date are listed.

Appendix I:
Interviews Conducted

Students

Bob Britten	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 25, 2006
Conning Chu	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 25, 2006
Laura Girresch	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 25, 2006
Jenna Johnson	University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Feb. 20, 2006
Graham Johnston	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 25, 2006
Mary Nguyen	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 25, 2006
Madison Park	Northwestern University	Jan. 31, 2006
Vannah Shaw	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 26, 2006
Diego Sorbara	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 26, 2006
Paul Tenorio	Northwestern University	Feb. 1, 2006

University Personnel

Tim Anderson	University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Feb. 20, 2006
Karen Roloff	DePaul University	Jan. 31, 2006
Phou Sengsavanh	Northwestern University	Jan. 26, 2006
Joe Starita	University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Feb. 20, 2006
Scott Winter	University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Feb. 20, 2006
Tom Warhover	University of Missouri, Columbia	Jan. 27, 2006

Newspaper Recruiters

Joe Grimm	Detroit Free Press	Feb. 3, 2006
Sarah Hicks	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Feb. 7, 2006
Sheila Solomon	Chicago Tribune	Jan. 31, 2006
Jim Walser	Charlotte Observer	Feb. 26, 2006

Appendix II:

Magazine Layout

This nontraditional thesis was conceived as a series of articles suitable a trade publication. Attached is a layout of how the stories and graphics could work in print with pullout quotes and headlines appropriate to the stories.



For journalism students, landing an internship is an increasingly tough assignment

With fewer spots available and more applicants than ever, the stakes have been raised in the internship game for students and newspapers alike.

By Caroline K. Hauser

Internships are critical for students jumping into the job market, but it's increasingly difficult for students to find those jobs as newspapers cut back their internship programs.

Add to that earlier deadlines to make those hiring decisions, the difficulty students say they have in finding information about internships online, persistent diversity issues and the pressure to stand out among hundreds of applicants, and the process can freak out even the most dedicated young journalist.

"Having internships, in this day and age, is imperative," said Phon Sengavanh, assistant director of career services at the University of Missouri. "It's not a résumé enhancer, it's a necessity."

That necessity — already a fiercely sought after prize — is in short supply this year because many papers continue to cut intern positions or entire intern programs for financial reasons. Recent ownership changes at newspapers and the overall decline of available news-paper jobs aren't helping the situation.

The Chicago Tribune, the Oregonian and the Cincinnati Enquirer are among the papers that will not have summer interns, slashing the number of spots available nationally by 35. In a process where less than 5 percent of internship

applicants to many major papers will be successful, that's a big hit.

The impact of that hit is not lessened by its wide distribution. Students who can't find an internship miss out on a valuable training opportunity. Universities suffer when their students don't get a chance to apply the theory they've been taught. Newspapers lose the chance to evaluate prospective employees and cover all that summer vacation without paying overtime.

Students, universities and newspapers understand the benefits, but they agree that internships are harder than ever to get. Savvy students also realize that different papers offer different experiences: Expectations, training and pay vary dramatically. Newspapers' emphasis on diversity varies as well, and where it is strong, minority and non-minority students sometimes question the hiring process. With fewer spots available this year than usual, tensions are high.

Supply and demand

Recruiters say this is one of the tightest years in recent memory for internships. "Normally I would have chosen and announced my interns by mid-December," said Tribune recruiter Shelia Solomon, who usually chooses

10 paid summer interns from an applicant pool of more than 2,000. "It would be behind me. But the hiring freeze last year and this year has gotten in the way of that."

In Cincinnati, this summer will be the second in a row without interns, and this year is the second time in four years the Oregonian has cut its program. The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer had 12 interns in 2005; this year, it will host six. The Los Angeles Times has 10 slots this year, compared with last year's 14, and Knight Ridder's corporate internships are gone. Students have noticed the shift in hiring practices.

"It seems like it's just a bad year for newspapers," said Jenna Johnson, a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "Newspapers that would usually hire five or six are just hiring one or two. I mean, if you're looking at Knight Ridder, don't even bother applying. It's a really big issue."

Jim Walser is the senior editor for staff development at one of those Knight Ridder papers, the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer. When he got involved with the Observer's internship program 20 years ago, the paper offered eight or nine paid summer internships.

"The last couple of years, because of Knight Ridder's situation and our own

I tend to hire a lot of people on the basis of character:

Joe Grimm, recruiter
Detroit Free Press

budget situation, we've had almost no purely paid Charlotte Observer internships," Walser said. "What we've done is sought out partnerships with universities." Each of the four students interning at the Observer this summer will be affiliated with or funded by a non-newspaper source: the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation and the University of North Carolina's M.S. Van Hecke Award.

"We're having to look at the cost of it," Walser said, "and that's a real shame, because I think internships are incredibly valuable for the business, they're valuable for the individual, they're valuable for the university."

"It's one of the downsides of papers saving the relative pennies that they save by cutting out internships," he continued. "It saves us 5,000 bucks to cut a 10-week internship. And we would rather save that 5,000 bucks than lay off somebody."

The dwindling number of internships has only magnified the increase in applications. "Journalism school enrollment is up," observed Detroit Free Press recruiter Joe Grimm. This year, Grimm fielded 500 applicants for four of the most competitive internship spots in journalism. The Boston Globe got 950 applications for 17 spots. Students' chances were actually better this year at the Washington Post, where 500 applicants vied for 22 positions, than at the Birmingham News, where seven out of 300 candidates were successful.

Most students apply to more than one paper, so a newspaper that picks its interns early increases the odds for applicants at other papers. But that doesn't mean everyone is finding a place to work. Grimm said he knew a

I got snubbed, and I'm sure most people have been snubbed at least once.

Coming Chu, junior
University of Missouri at Columbia

student who sent out 120 applications to small papers without any luck. More commonly, a student will send out 20 to 30 applications, though a batch that size may not yield results.

"I have a lot of friends that are extremely, extremely talented, journalists that can't find an internship for the summer just because there really aren't that many," Nebraska student Jenna Johnson said.

"With newsrooms cutting staff, you'd think that they'd try to compensate for that a little by bringing in a couple more interns, but instead they're just cutting [programs] all together. This is the generation that they're going to need to be filling those reporting slots," she added.

As a secondary benefit, internships are valuable to universities as an admission tool, said Scott Winter, who recruits for Nebraska's journalism school. "If internships dry up, it's going to be a big blow to places like us, because to get them to come out to Lincoln, Neb., is a hell of a feat anyway," he said. "But internships are my wild card — that we're sending kids to New York, we're sending them to Denver, we're sending them all over."

Winter also has an industry perspective. As an editor at the Bismarck (N.D.) Tribune, he saw the difference interns could make in a newsroom. "Often our interns wrote the best stories," he said. "Unquestionably. Because they weren't limited to some paradigm of what some story should be, like grizzly reporters were. If a concert was coming to town, instead of just talking to the publicist and doing a who, what, where, when kind of story like the regular entertainment reporter would do, this kid would be really excited about talking to Trent

Reznor. "They don't know what they're upposed to do, so they do everything. Seven bucks an hour, and they're getting section front stories or getting on the front page on a Saturday night when they had to be the night reporter," Winter said. "That's a hell of a deal for a newspaper that's shutting down internships."

The diversity factor

Even where internships are available, the competition is intense. When a recruiter has 1,000 applications for 10 internships, she can be pretty picky. A perfect cover letter, a flawless résumé and killer clips are the bare minimum for consideration. As internships dwindle, some students are on edge about what gives them — or their competition — an edge.

"A lot of the non-minority students feel as if the minority students have an advantage, and of course the minority students don't feel like they do have an advantage, just because a lot of them feel they have more to prove," said Sengsavanh from her career services office at Missouri.

"I think for the most part there is this common misconception that minority students have just the minority status and they're not qualified. That's not true, because when you're recruiting, I've seen plenty of well-qualified minorities not get positions," she added. Madison Park, a recent graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, noted: "A lot of non-minority people ... seem to have this underlying feeling that it's reverse discrimination, that they're not getting these internships or jobs or getting into these programs because they're white."

Could you get a summer gig?

Listed below are the results of a very unscientific survey. Most students apply for multiple internships, so it's safe to say there's some overlap among the papers, but a student who can afford to work in San Antonio may not be able to move to Hartford. Where necessary, midpoints of ranges were used to determine percents.

Newspaper	Number of applicants for summer 2006	Internships spots available in 2006	Percent of applicants hired for summer 2006
Hartford Courant	80	20	25
The Buffalo News	75 to 100	14	16
St. Petersburg Times	350 to 400	20 to 22	5.6
The Arizona Republic, Phoenix	300	16	5.33
The Orange County Register, Santa Ana	175 to 200	10	5.33
The Honolulu Advertiser	100	5	5
The Washington Post	450 to 500	22	4.63
San Antonio Express-News	200	9	4.5
Tulsa World	200	9	4.5
The News & Observer, Raleigh	150	6	4
San Francisco Chronicle	more than 100	4	<4
The Courier-Journal, Louisville	200	7	3.5
Houston Chronicle	more than 200	7	<3.5
Star Tribune, Minneapolis	400	12	3
The Denver Post	350	10	2.86
The Virginian-Pilot	300 to 500	12	2.66
The Fresno Bee	114	3	2.63
The Birmingham News	300	7	2.33
Orlando Sentinel	300	7	2.33
The Plain Dealer, Cleveland	400	9	2.25
The Tampa Tribune	300	6	2
The Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City	more than 200	4	<2
Los Angeles Times	more than 500	10	<2
The Seattle Times	400 to 600	8 to 10	1.8
The Boston Globe	950	17	1.79
The News Journal, Wilmington	500	7	1.4
The Blade, Toledo	300	4	1.33
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	150 to 300	2 to 4	1.33
Detroit Free Press	more than 500	4	<.08

I have a reputation for – I hope not being blunt, although I've heard that I can be.

She made a few people cry.

*Phou Sengsavanh, assistant director, career services
University of Missouri at Columbia,
on Sheila Solomon*

*Sheila Solomon, recruiter
Chicago Tribune*

she said. "And that all these newspapers are looking for minority kids and if they're not one of them, they're not going to get a prestigious internship. "I think it's bullshockey, but I actually hear it a lot."

A number of journalism programs, internships and scholarships are aimed specifically at minority students. "For a white kid to get an internship is really, really tough," said Winter, who focuses heavily on raising minority enrollment at Nebraska's journalism school. "In terms of internships, a minority student who is performing well has a really good shot."

"I'm not going to discount the quality of their work. Every single one of our minorities is doing great work, but it just shows what minorities can do if they get in this field. They're pretty much gotten every internship they've gone after," he noted.

That can be a tough thing to hear for a non-minority student who is also doing good work but has a harder time getting internships. Nebraska junior Johnson said: "It's nothing against minority students because everyone that's gotten an internship is qualified for that internship and has worked really hard for that internship. But a lot of times there are people just as qualified who have a lot more experience who just aren't getting internships at all."

Johnson was reminded of the need for diversity when she saw she was the only female daytime intern at her last internship. "It's a hard thing to juggle," she said. "That can kind of be kind of a tension point. You hear snide comments here and there, which is really disappointing, just because it shouldn't be like that."

For some, the issue is felt more than

beard. "It's not explicitly said to me or to my fellow minority journalism students," Park said of her time at Medill, "but it's been said to some of my friends. When we talk about it sometimes, it's like, yes, I totally get that feeling, like how did you get X, Y, Z when I didn't get X, Y, Z?"

Park noted that non-minority students might be frustrated that "it's these big names like the L.A. Times that have a program specifically for minorities. If the Bucktown Courier had a program specifically for minorities, I don't think there'd be too much fuss about it." Atlanta Journal-Constitution recruiter Sarah Hicks knows minority recruitment is a delicate balance. "You do have to work hard at creating a diverse pool of candidates," she said. "You have to be thinking about that all the time. How am I going to bring a diverse mixture of people to this group? And what do you do to do that?"

One way Hicks and other recruiters attract a diverse applicant pool is by making the summer round of conventions. "If you look at my year," Hicks said, "if I went to the NABJ, NAHJ, AAJA and the gay and lesbian gathering in September, I am probably going to come out of those four conventions with a good short list of potential intern candidates."

Despite non-minority students' unhappiness about what they see as a somewhat skewed system, recruiters will continue to seek out minority students who know to network at conventions or apply to targeted programs. Part of that focus comes from a push to diversify the industry as a whole. According to a survey by the American Society of Newspaper Editors, in 2004,

Who pays what

Below is a sampling of internship salaries, as reported by the newspapers. The extremes of the scale are not represented here. As Joe Grimm put it, "The Oakland Press will let you intern there for 18 hours a week for 50 bucks. That sucks. You could make more money at Starbucks."

Newspaper	Weekly pay
The Washington Post	\$825 to \$925
The Plain Dealer, Cleveland	\$692
The Boston Globe	\$675
Star Tribune, Minneapolis	\$673
The Arizona Republic, Phoenix	\$650
Los Angeles Times	\$600
The Virginian-Pilot	\$575
Seattle Post-Intelligencer	\$550
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution	\$550
Orlando Sentinel	\$525
The Seattle Times	\$525
The Blade, Toledo	\$512
San Antonio Express-News	\$500
The Charlotte Observer	\$500
The Denver Post	\$500
The Tampa Tribune	\$480
Tulsa World	\$480
The Courier-Journal, Louisville	\$475
The News Journal, Wilmington	\$475
The Salt Lake Tribune, Salt Lake City	\$475
The Fresno Bee	\$450
St. Petersburg Times	\$450
The Orange County Register, Santa Ana	\$425
The Birmingham News	\$400
The Buffalo News	\$390

Internships are like going into a clothing store and trying something on. Try something on, see if it flatters you.

*Madison Park, recent graduate
Northwestern University*

Expensive experience

As sensitive as it is, racial diversity is at least visible on the recruitment radar. Socio-economic status as a factor in internship hiring is more subtle, and the relative dearth of newspaper internships available this year exacerbates the economic realities of the summer internship search.

A summer internship, even one that is paid, can be an expensive undertaking. A student with more resources is likely to launch a wider search, substantially increasing his or her chances of adding an internship to the résumé. Next year, that student will have an edge when looking for another internship or a job.

"I've gone through \$20 or \$30 with just two or three applications," said University of Missouri senior Diego Sorbara. Between postage and photocopying, applying for 20 internships – a number Detroit Free Press recruiter Joe Grimm says is common – easily costs \$100.

"I sometimes misuse copiers here because I'm a student and I'm poor and I don't want to go to Kinko's again and get into any further debt," Sorbara said. Jenna Johnson used the same tactic. "I did a lot of copying here at work, but you buy the résumé paper, which is a good 10 bucks there. You buy the envelopes. It costs two bucks to mail each one. I bet mine was probably 60 to 80 bucks."

From the outset, candidate

pools can be limited by economic means. "Students of privilege tend to be the ones who know the game," said Sengsavanh.

Beyond the cost of applying, a student's family circumstances may shape his or her internship possibilities. Some students can swing an unpaid internship only by living at home; others can rely on parental support for a cross-country move. As a result, those who can afford to take an internship with little or no pay build experience.

Waller has seen how that works. A few years ago, a student "pretty much begged me" for an unpaid internship, he said. Waller obliged, and the student's parents kicked in money for housing and meals. "His parents were willing to throw him some extra money because they knew it would probably pay off, and it did. So how do you do that for a poor kid? It's very hard to make that work."

Unpaid internships typically mean students get academic credit, but that's hardly compensation.

"We do offer credit for internships, but I try to discourage that because then students have to pay for the experience," said Sengsavanh. "It's a Catch-22 because a lot of the students who don't have the money and have to work summer jobs to pay this year's tuition bill can't find time to take those internships. You're leaving a lot of students out due to economics."

Joe Grimm agreed. "A univer-

For some internships, finding out how to apply is the first reporting task

Knowing that internships are a critical factor in finding a job after graduation, journalism students are on the hunt early for information about what newspapers want. A handful of papers have clear links to internship information, while many bury the guidelines or requirements on their Web sites. Some rely primarily on face-to-face meetings at conventions, despite the fact that most students start their searches online. Many students say finding internship information for newspapers is a constant source of frustration.

"The application [information] is almost always really, really difficult to find," Missouri graduate student Bob Britten said. "It's almost never easy to find through the Web site. You really have to dig to . . . ferret this stuff out."

Missouri senior and application veteran Diego Sorbara agreed. "I would always have questions and really it's even hard to find out who to call or who to contact with questions," he said. "Someone interested in interning at the Birmingham (Ala.) News, for example, might type 'Birmingham News internship' into an Internet search engine and find listings on the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Web site and the University of California-Berkeley's internship page. More than a dozen online descriptions of the Birmingham internship program direct prospective applicants to assistant managing editor Randy Henderson. Henderson died in February.

Other newspapers request that students apply to their human resources department. In the case of the San Francisco Chronicle, not even a name, telephone number or e-mail address is given as a contact.

"The places should list clearer definitions of interns and dates and deadlines and who interns should call if they have questions," Missouri senior

last, how much they pay, how fierce the competition is, what positions are available and what perks the program offers. Perks range from mentoring to housing to dental coverage.

Non-reporting interns face additional challenges in finding information.

"Sometimes they'll go into a great deal of information for their reporting candidates, and they'll really gloss over the fact that they have copy editors, too," Sorbara said. "They'll say, 'We offer reporting in city government, minority affairs, education, features.' And then they'll say and copy editing and photography, which is like, great, you value us that much less. A bunch of times they just don't explain what you can do. Can I do news copy editing? Can I be a features copy editor? Can I be a sports copy editor? Will I get to do design? They're just very vague."

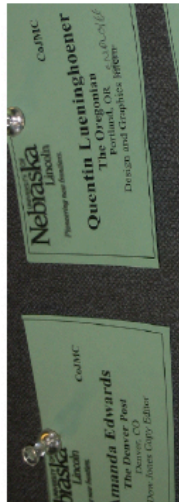
Finding internship details falls on the student, both recruiters and students agreed, and some students said they think their peers aren't working hard enough to find out about opportunities.

"They'll sign up to see the recruiter, but that's all they do," University of Missouri student Conning Chu said. "They let the school do the work for them. They don't do their own research, they don't look at other internships, they don't know what papers they would really like to intern at. They don't know anything about the internships."

"I was looking online all the time. I know where I want to go," she added. "But most people don't. If you don't have that motivation, you're not going to get an internship."

Johnson takes an optimistic view of the difficulty in finding internship information. "Maybe that's their recruiting tactic," he said. "If you can't find it, you're not a good journalist."

— Caroline K. Houser



A university internship board shows exactly how high the stakes are for students seeking internships. Nebraska senior Quentin Luenninghoener interned at the Oregonian last summer, and he was hired for a post-graduation job there in February.

wants to go to Austin because they pay you and they subsidize your housing," Park said.

Married Missouri student Bob Britten last year, and he found one at the Seattle Times. Pay "was one of the things I looked for," he said. Interns at the Times make \$525 a week.

"Still, we came out behind because we were paying rent on two apartments," he said. "We weren't crippled by it. But that was a tricky part of it. We talked about sub-leasing to recoup some of that, but we weren't crazy about the idea of someone living in our house for a summer that we'd never met before. And it's a tough market."

Grimm said he knows it's tough to sublease in a college town, but people do it. "How much should we pay people to cover two apartments and health insurance? I tell them what their take-home pay will be. I'm not embarrassed that we pay students \$541 a week to work for us."

The economic strain of renting an apartment in two towns is compounded by the emotional strain of moving to a new city and committing to housing sight unseen.

Diego Sorbara's housing situation in Hartford didn't help him acclimate to his temporary home. Knowing he would be working the night shift, Sorbara signed on to live with a photographer about four blocks from the shop.

"One of the first nights I was there," he said, "they had me edit a graphic. It

was a full-page map of metro Hartford with little stars placed on where there were shootings. White stars for nonfatal, black stars for fatal, and there were about three white stars either on my block or a block or two from where I lived. So I was pretty freaked out about where I lived."

Grimm has heard even worse stories. "I talked to one person who moved into a trailer that had been owned by a guy who had a dog, and the trailer was infested with fleas. When she complained to the editor, they just laughed at her and said, 'Last summer's intern lived in his car. What are you complaining about?'"

While he doesn't control where his interns live, Grimm said he tries to keep an eye on it. "We try to give them good advice so they don't end up in anicky place," he said. "There have been horror stories of interns who have ended up in horrible situations because the editors wouldn't take any time out. They just said, oh, find a place."

When they can afford to be, students are savvy about what 10 weeks of Ra-men noodles can do for their career. Johnson bunked with a local family when she interned at the Norfolk (Neb.) Daily News after her first year of college. She made about \$7 an hour.

"It was the experience for that one," she said, laughing. "Once you factor out living expenses and food and gas money and things like that, getting an internship isn't going to make you rich." •

sity will charge you three credit hours so that you can get credit for your internship," he said. "Did they earn the money? No."

Even among paid internships, all are not created equal. Dow Jones Newspaper Fund business reporting and copy editing interns at the News & Observer receive \$350 a week. A copy editing intern at the Washington Post makes \$925 a week. N&O reporting interns earn \$500 a week; Post reporting interns get \$825.

An intern at the Buffalo News makes \$390 a week. An intern at the (Cleveland) Plain Dealer gets \$692 a week plus some impressive benefits.

"I know somebody who got her teeth fixed in Cleveland last summer because she had health insurance," Grimm said.

Grimm's paper helps the income situation by providing interns with cars to use on assignment. "Not everybody can rent a car," he said. "That keeps out the poor people. They have to say, hey, this is no joke. I don't have any money. My parents don't have any money. I'm barely making school. How can I get a car? Sorry, I have to turn down your internship."

That situation has come up in Atlanta. "We had to walk away from the idea of doing an internship [with one woman] simply because she didn't have a car. So it does sometimes get down to that moment of, well, the economics just doesn't work out for you, even though long term would it have been good for her? Yes, it would have been."

Madison Park has dealt with the rental car issue. "If I'm from California and I'm going to work in Raleigh, I'm going to have to rent one, because I'm not going to drive my parents' car from California, and I don't have a car. That gets expensive."

The other major expense — and, often, a major source of stress — for summer interns is housing. "Everyone

It's Nov. 18. I have an offer. What do I do?

In the life of a journalism student, the internship calendar is at least as important as the academic calendar. Diego Sorbara, a senior at the University of Missouri, described on his blog the anxiety of the annual newspaper internship mating dance as "a freak-out that has stretched itself slowly into a week-long panic attack."

When applying to colleges, students watch the acceptances and rejections roll in before they have to make a decision. With internships, it's not quite that simple. A student may send out 20 applications and get an offer before hearing from 17 of the others. That student may also feel pressure from a recruiter eager to nail down his or her intern list.

"If they do get offered something pretty early, they have this dilemma of should I take it or should I hold out for something better?" Missouri junior Counting Cui said.

Given the fierce competition for internships, especially in the current economic climate, the maxim about a bird in the hand may seem like an obvious answer, but internships are business decisions for students, too.

Laura Giresch was happy to score a gig at the Belleville News-Democrat last summer, but she faced the challenges of a small paper.

"I didn't have my own computer, desk or phone," she said. "It's not very professional to say, well, you can try me back at any of these four numbers."

Would holding out for a bigger paper with more resources have helped? Maybe, she said. "I still think it was a great experience. It was just a little unorganized and by the fly."

The matching process is complicated by the fact that application deadlines vary wildly, even among similar-size newspapers, and they have been creeping earlier in the fall for years.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution recruiter Sarah Hicks lost some candidates with a Dec. 1 deadline. "I'm actually going to move it to Nov. 15," she said, "partially because an unscientific survey of other papers has shown me that many, many people are making their choices and they're already done by Dec. 1. If you get into the Christmas holiday, people have already made their choices. The interns have other offers."

Getting an offer in October or November, while heartening, can cause more worry than joy, at least initially. Cui received an early offer last fall. "It was between take this one and possibly miss out on something better or still dig around and maybe not get anything," she said. "So I ended up taking it."

In some cases, students are given only a day or two to make their decisions. Chicago Tribune recruiter Sheila Solomon gives students a week, but understands the logic of the quick deadlines.

"In most instances, the reason why I won't give you more than a week is because I'm going to lose somebody else," she said. "I'm going right to my No. 2, and I need to be able to that quickly because there are a lot of people who want to be interns and not as many who are as prepared to be as successful as some others. And there are a lot of us, comparatively speaking, going after those few."

When she advises students who come into Missouri's career services office, Phoebe Sengsavanh sees the toll early deadlines and early offers can take. "Pressure tactics [are] not uncommon," she said. "For the newspaper industry, at least with the recruiters, if they want somebody, they will try to get them because they know everybody else will want that person, too."

Sometimes that means a paper will

In the word 'internship,' newspapers find plenty of different meanings

Academic research has found that internships pay off tangibly in higher starting salaries for recent journalism graduates and that students hold more realistic views of their skills after they complete internships. Experiential education advocates say that nothing solidifies classroom learning like practical application.

But a couple of sample listings immediately show even the biggest newspapers in the country have very different perspectives on what an internship involves.

- Our internship program seeks college juniors, seniors, and graduate students who thrive in a "sink or swim" atmosphere. This is not a classroom situation. The emphasis is on doing, not teaching. (From the Chicago Tribune)

- The Times offers hands-on journalism work experience. However, little training is provided, so previous newspaper internship experience is preferable. (From the Los Angeles Times)

- The first week of the internship is an orientation program to New York City and the newsroom. (From the New York Times)
- During the first week, we have a welcome lunch to introduce interns to senior editors, a daylong bus tour of the Washington metropolitan area and computer training. We also have seminars on surviving the summer, legal and libel issues, and newsroom online operations. Weekly lunches with senior editors and reporters as guest speakers enhance understanding of The Washington Post and the industry. (From the Washington Post)

- Tribune recruiter Sheila Solomon explains her paper's stance. "We really do expect that on day two you will be given an assignment and you will be able to do the assignment, and it may be a page one story, you never know," she said. "And that's by virtue of experience that we've seen you have had from those gatherings, too. It's a great opportunity to do a little bit of generic brainstorming," said Atlanta Journal-Constitution recruiter Sarah Hicks, who organizes a luncheon every Tuesday for her interns. "It's more of a check-in time because I've realized that the 10-week internship goes so fast."

- Still, one size doesn't fit all. Diego Sorbara was a Dow Jones Newspaper Fund copy editing intern last summer at the Hartford Courant. "The intern program was geared more toward the reporting interns, which was frustrating, because it was held on a Tuesday, my day off, and at noon, which is usually when I wake up," he said. "They would bring in a speaker from the paper. A reporter, sometimes an editor. Never a designer or copy editor, so you could tell it was really geared toward people who wrote. I mainly went because they had free lunch, and it was good food."

- For students making their first foray into the working world, knowing what questions to ask can be hard, but the more informed they are, the better the internship is likely to be for both the student and the newspaper.
- "Internship is a word like jabberwocky," Roloff said. "It can mean whatever you want it to mean."

— Caroline K. Hauser

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- "Some interns will kind of drag their feet about it, but I thought that was really, really well done. I learned a lot from it," she said.
- Recruiters and editors can learn from those gatherings, too. "It's a great opportunity to do a little bit of generic brainstorming," said Atlanta Journal-Constitution recruiter Sarah Hicks, who organizes a luncheon every Tuesday for her interns. "It's more of a check-in time because I've realized that the 10-week internship goes so fast."

- Still, one size doesn't fit all. Diego Sorbara was a Dow Jones Newspaper Fund copy editing intern last summer at the Hartford Courant. "The intern program was geared more toward the reporting interns, which was frustrating, because it was held on a Tuesday, my day off, and at noon, which is usually when I wake up," he said. "They would bring in a speaker from the paper. A reporter, sometimes an editor. Never a designer or copy editor, so you could tell it was really geared toward people who wrote. I mainly went because they had free lunch, and it was good food."

- For students making their first foray into the working world, knowing what questions to ask can be hard, but the more informed they are, the better the internship is likely to be for both the student and the newspaper.
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- At some newspapers, that opportunity to reflect comes in the form of weekly seminars or brownbag lunches. Jenna Johnson, a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, encountered just such a program at the Omaha World-Herald last summer. "The investigative reporter came in and talked about heading out on some of these dangerous as-

- signments and things she did to protect herself while reporting," Johnson said. "The cops reporter talked about ways to get police reports they don't want you to have. We had a business reporter come in and teach us basic statistics to make sure we don't screw up numbers when we're calculating things for stories."
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