Interns for Indiana

INITIATIVE

The Discovery Learning Research Center created the Interns for Indiana (IfI) program in 2004 through initial support from Lilly Endowment. The program goals are threefold: offer students professional training through experiential learning, introduce students to myriad occupational opportunities across the state, and foster economic growth of local businesses through increased access to skilled labor. IfI focuses on key state needs to enhance the quality of Indiana’s workforce by providing experiences that lead more of the highly qualified Purdue students to seek in-state employment after graduation, while driving economic development and job creation through the support of high-tech start up companies.

Structured and supervised experiential learning highlights classroom relevance to the professional world. The IfI program combines an internship in a start-up company with professional development seminars, peer group interactions and individual participant analyses of their experiences. Students apply the diverse skills they learn in school while gaining professional experience, exposure to entrepreneurship, and familiarity with local high-tech employment opportunities. High-tech startups, and the companies they become, are a promising source of attractive new jobs.

IMPACT

- The Purdue Interns for Indiana program impacts the state by providing students with entrepreneurial education and skill development opportunities, by promoting economic development, and contributing to retention of talent.
- To date, nearly 600 students from a wide variety of majors at four Purdue campuses have experienced an entrepreneurial environment and honed their skills through internships at 205 Indiana startups. 94 percent of students report improved real-world and problem solving skills and 75 percent of students report increased interest in startups.
- Economic impact: More than 228,000 hours of labor have contributed to startup companies; 81 percent of company partners have reported growth; at least 27 percent of students have been hired by their internship companies; and at least 18 companies have been started by former interns.
- Retaining talent: Based on data available, 67 percent of Hoosier interns participating in the program remain in the state one year or more following graduation. In addition, 25 percent of nonresident interns remain in the state one year or more following graduation.

Quotes from IFI students:
“Working for a growing small startup business has helped me to realize that there are plenty of career options available related to my field right here…”
“It really opened my eyes to what sort of technology is here in Indiana…so I would say it influenced, encouraged me to work in Indiana.”
“At some point in the future I would love to start my own company. I have seen what is required in legal, accounting, and technology skills, and I would love to try and make my ideas a reality.”

Quote from IFI partner company:
“[Having an electrical engineer is] the biggest piece we were missing as part of our team. You know, we’ve got mechanical engineers, pneumatic experience, but bringing that together. ... we needed a lot of the programming to be done and experience with electrical circuits has helped with the project as well.”