



Discovery Park Impact

Interns for Indiana

NEED

The problem of “brain drain” is a challenge facing Indiana as talented college graduates leave the state in search of high-paying, high-tech jobs in large metropolitan and/or coastal regions.

RESOLUTION

The Discovery Learning Center created the Interns for Indiana (IfI) program in 2004 through initial support from Lilly Endowment, Inc. The program goals are threefold: (1) offer students professional training through experiential learning, (2) introduce students to myriad occupational opportunities across the state, and (3) 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. Keeping highly qualified and educated graduates in the state will drive driving economic development and job creation through the support of high-tech start-up companies. The program combines an internship in a start-up company with professional development seminars and 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.

IMPACTS

- IfI has placed 374 students with 140 partner companies for more than 146,500 hours of labor.
- Nearly one in four companies has hired their intern for full-time employment after graduation.
- Over 70% of IfI alumni have remained in the state after graduation, compared to the overall Purdue retention rate of 56%.
- 80% of the interns respond that the program increased their interest in working for a start-up company while 62% developed an interest in starting their own companies.
- 96% of companies reported that the interns assisted in company growth.

“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...” (Student response)

“I learned how to go about running your own business and the steps that it takes to be successful as an entrepreneur.” (Student response)

“The value of working in a small company was definitely something I realized as a result of this program.” (Student response)

“As a small business, we continually are faced with a variety of projects that are both directly and indirectly related to client and operational administration. It seems there are rarely enough resources available to respond to every concern in a timely fashion. The additional support we’ve received has allowed us to better serve client’s needs and attend to various internal and administrative functions with greater ease.” (Company response)