

## ENGAGING STUDENTS IN APPLIED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: HOW TO RUN EFFECTIVE MENTORING AND SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS WHILE MINIMIZING THE BURDEN ON FACULTY

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### ABSTRACT

Applied learning activities such as mentoring programs, internships, and service learning provide an opportunity for business students to get real life experiences in the field of their choice. Emphasis on applied learning has increased in recent years as AACSB has stipulated in the AACSB Faculty Leadership Task Report (1996) that one of the major problem with business education is the "lack of real-world business contact." As many marketing jobs do not follow a predictable and orderly career path and require specific industry knowledge, applied learning opportunities are especially important for marketing students. Applied learning programs can provide marketing students an understanding of the marketing environment in specific industries, information on the requirements necessary for success in different occupational settings, as well as opportunities for networking.

Unfortunately, because business schools often lack the resources to adequately staff applied learning programs, much of the responsibility for such programs often falls on the shoulders of faculty. Internships represent the only area in applied learning where there has been substantial improvement in recent years in terms of the availability of university resources. Most internship programs in business schools are currently staffed by counselors who are responsible for compiling lists of internships and coordinating all internship activities. Many business schools are also expanding the opportunities for students to be involved in mentoring programs. A 1996 survey of 154 business schools conducted by Schlee (2000) found 41% of business schools had formal mentoring programs, 3% had informal mentoring programs, and 4% intended to start mentoring programs in the future. Business

faculty involved in such programs provided career advice (52%), met with the student and their mentor (19%), or went on field trips with students (19%). But, regardless of the level of involvement, the vast majority of business faculty who were involved in such programs received no compensation in terms of load release or payment. The lack of administrative support for faculty involvement in mentoring and other applied learning activities presents an ethical dilemma for business faculty. How much should faculty be involved in activities that benefit students at the expense of the time available for publications and other professional development activities that are rewarded by the university?

Members of the panel will present information on various alternatives that provide opportunities for marketing students to engage in applied learning opportunities without requiring significant amounts of uncompensated time from marketing faculty. The following types of applied learning programs will be discussed:

- a. Programs based on grants to stimulate applied learning.
- b. Programs supported by the university and used for enhancing academic programs and recruiting prospective students.
- c. Student-sponsored programs.
- d. Association-sponsored programs.
- e. Industry-sponsored programs
- f. Online programs

Information on hybrid models, such as the ones used by Seattle Pacific University and Seattle University, will also be presented.

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