Internships. Internships. Internships. The Great Search is on.

I started my search over the Presidents Day weekend for summer internships. It's always a process: brainstorming a list of companies that I'd like to work for, searching for comparable companies, looking into their career listings for internships, sorting through application materials needed, and tailoring my resume and cover letter to the various position descriptions, etc. Honestly, the internship process is not a quick and easy thing to do by yourself, and almost goes to the extreme of being a complete time suck. BUT it's totally worth it. There are so many opportunities out there for you and me that are waiting to be discovered!

The past two summers, I have been extremely lucky with both of my internships. My freshman year, I found out through the Honors College newsletter about the DC Internships program. Since I am a huge fan of DC and wanted to learn more about philanthropy and non-profit associations, I hustled my application components together, applied, was accepted, and spent eight weeks on a eight week summer internship program in Washington, DC (thanks to a large scholarship). I took two classes at George Mason University, stayed at George Washington University, and interned at Jumpstart DC (a national early education non-profit). The following summer, I interned at Old Sturbridge Village, a living history museum and non-profit that I love, near my hometown. Both of these experiences have expanded my connections, broadened my skill set, and developed my marketing knowledge in many ways. Real world experience and doing some of the grunt work is the best way to figure out what you want to do and don't want to later on in your career.

Regardless of your major, or the school you are a part of, internships provide an out of
the classroom experience like no other, and can even lead to job offers in the future. We can agree that they are a good thing, right? So, why aren't some of my friends actively looking...it's a difficult search, and a challenge to find paid opportunities. Time and money are two very important factors to be considered.

To make the process of applying to internships more simple, I definitely recommend using many sources and applying to as many opportunities as you can. As my mom would say, "Throw enough mud on the wall and some of it will stick." Sure, that means that lots of your hard work and effort may be for naught, but with a strong resume and involvement on campus the chances are high you will get something!

When starting to look into internships, I usually go to UMass Experience, and Isenberg Experience first. Then, I broaden my search and start branching out to specific companies that are industry leaders. I look up their websites and find their career pages. Some other options are internships.com and monster.com; there are a ton of internship and job sites at your fingertips. Typically, internships are posted for summer around this time. Many internships that are available for marketing close at the beginning of March. Different majors have different time schedules for applications. Do your best to keep tabs on when applications are going to open and close. I do this through an Excel chart, but it may be easier for you on some other program.

Oftentimes, you just have to apply with your resume, sometimes it's a resume and cover letter; and as you move up to the junior and senior level internships, a resume, cover letter, and answers to industry related questions are all part of the application. Your application gets your interest out there, and if you get a reply back that's a good sign that they are interested in you, too.

Once that mutual interest is established, that brings me to my next post on interviews. Stay tuned.

P.S. The featured image is from my Old Sturbridge Village internship album. Lamb time is the best time!

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