

Honoring the Best

Indiana INTERNnet Presents Awards

By Tom Schuman

Indiana INTERNnet has been helping connect students and employers across the state since 2001. The sixth annual IMPACT Awards recognizes internship excellence among interns (three winners in two categories), employers and career development professionals.

Outstanding Intern of the Year (non-traditional)

Indiana Humanities had a need – a big need – in helping it effectively manage a major project in 2011. Alex Miser filled that role, and others, to the highest degree.

Food for Thought is a traveling exhibit at the 17-day Indiana State Fair. Indiana Humanities had to find a better way to oversee this important effort. The organization called on Miser, who had graduated from Indiana University in May 2011.

Kristen Fuh Wells, director of communications, explains that Miser brought energy and enthusiasm to the challenge. He was able to arrange for Indiana Humanities' partner groups to get involved and help staff the exhibit. Not only did that reduce the demands on staff, but it accomplished one of the organization's primary goals – involving partners at a deeper level.

Miser, now the communications coordinator at BSA LifeStructures, went well beyond just securing the assistance. He prepared the partners for the volunteer experience, often meeting with them directly at the State Fair to provide extra assistance, and conducted post-event surveys to help improve the effort in the future.

“He went out of his way to make sure the experience was a positive one,” offers Fuh Wells, “for our partners, Indiana Humanities and the thousands of visitors to the exhibit.”

Fuh Wells adds that Miser “came to work every day with an upbeat attitude and can-do spirit. He was professional in his conduct and communications, and he truly appreciated constructive criticism.”

Outstanding Intern of the Year (college)

Proactiveness. Contagious enthusiasm. Ultimate professional. These were some of the words and phrases used to describe Ashley Herring's work in the spring of 2011 with the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce.

A then-senior at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Herring was able to make a significant difference during her internship while balancing a full class schedule and a number of other commitments.

Alane Summers, who was manager of corporate partnerships at the Indianapolis chamber at the time, recalls, “Ashley voluntarily worked more hours at the chamber than required of her because she felt driven to serve her team and the chamber members. Her work ethic really inspired the rest of the team. While Ashley often comments that she learned a lot (during her internship), I'd like to think that her team members learned a lot from her during her time with us.”

One of Herring's major projects was developing and executing an online system to better manage attendee evaluations of programs and events. She also implemented the survey on a new event management software system and became the in-house expert on questions related to the software.

As is the case with many interns, Herring did not have to look too far for her first job. She is now the events manager at the Indianapolis chamber.

Outstanding Intern of the Year (college)

When Josh Bloxome served as a systems engineering intern in the summer of 2011 at Raytheon Technical Services Company, he worked on the HH-60G Helicopter Avionics upgrade project. He contributed in a number of areas, including a related portion of the program that was intended to make it easier for the customer to load software on its aircraft.

The Food for Thought exhibit was a critical project that Alex Miser managed for Indiana Humanities.



Leanne Anderson, Raytheon training manager and intern coordinator, notes that several experienced engineers working on this program had to be reassigned to other tasks.

“Josh recommended we let him work on it. He provided specific guidance ... and reported progress back to our team’s management,” she says. “Josh developed step-by-step procedures for using the new program that have helped us tremendously. By letting Josh completely lead this task, it was completed ahead of schedule and under budget.”

Bloxsome worked on a number of other tasks related to the project, completing them “swiftly and accurately.”

Anderson reports that after only two weeks on the job, Bloxsome was truly integrated into the team and was looked at as a system engineer, not an intern.

In a testament to his abilities (Bloxsome is now CEO of BloxTech, an information technology support company), Anderson reports that “we still call him with questions. ... He provided significant contributions to our project and exceeded our expectations. The best praise we can offer is that Josh is truly missed on our project.”



An intern for Raytheon Technical Services Company is filmed by a WFYI intern during the shooting of an Indiana INTERNnet video.

Outstanding Career Development Professional

In more than 20 years at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, Susan Gresham has proven to be a “high-energy, positive-thinking, driven and motivated leader.” As director of the Career Development Center (CDC), she leads a staff that thrives on student success.

Among the initiatives led by Gresham:

- A learning contract completed by both the student and intern employer
- Site visits to every internship location within the state with site supervisors, through an evaluation, assigning a letter grade that accounts for 40% of the intern’s grade
- Actively recruiting employers to campus for class presentations, panel discussions and special events
- Establishment of an orientation program, providing interns with a name badge, business cards and leather portfolio to ease their transition into the business world

Debbie Miller, associate director of the CDC, says Gresham’s “enthusiasm, sense of humor and positive attitude are passed on to others each day.” A leader by example, she is “never too busy to stop what she is working on, look up and smile at anyone who stops in. She always welcomes students into her offices and creatively advises each.”

Outstanding Employer Award (not-for-profit)

Internships are a way of life at The International Center. High school, undergraduate, graduate and international students

(along with nontraditional interns) have been part of meaningful and relevant projects. Each intern helps customize their experience by outlining specific goals they wish to accomplish.

A recent intern commented: “Through this internship I have been given the opportunity to perform a cost/profit analysis of the Destination Services Program, create the first edition of the relocation department’s monthly newsletter, network with international business professionals while utilizing my French and Spanish skills, and receive training and knowledge on cultural orientations.”

Another intern, a finance major, revised the Center’s financial policy, met with the organization’s investment advisor and made an executive committee presentation based on his findings. A graphics design major created various promotional materials, brochures and flyers that are being utilized throughout the organization.

All interns attend weekly meetings, guided by the chief operations officer, that focus on a variety of professional development topics. Students also walk away (or stay at the Center in full-time roles) with a portfolio of meaningful project work, networking opportunities and other external experiences.

Outstanding Employer Award (for-profit)

ExactTarget is one of the shining stars of Indiana business growth in recent years. Its unique internship program falls into the same category.

The hiring process focuses on the individuals, not the roles that need filled. After students’ strengths, interests and future career goals are identified and multiple career planning discussions takes place, those who are part of the Slingshot Internship Program receive their departmental placement.

All interns are guaranteed two “resumé-worthy” projects that they own from strategy to implementation. Providing challenging and impactful projects is a “point of pride” for teams that are hosting interns.

Each intern receives a mentor (ExactTarget ambassador) before starting their work with the company. A new 2011 program allowed interns to gain experience in an area outside of their team.

Slingshot interns engage in “coffee chats” – one-on-one meetings with others throughout the organization – weekly roundtable discussions with executives and in 2011 enjoyed a visit with Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels at the Indiana Statehouse.

ExactTarget interns worked with Indiana INTERNnet to form an Indy Interns group last year, which gathered for social outings and a community service event at Gleaners Food Bank. A similar initiative is planned in 2012.