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Canceled Internships Amidst COVID-19 Outbreak Leave Students Questioning What to Do Now

Michaela Moore, Staff Reporter

The coronavirus pandemic has created a great deal of uncertainty and disappointment for students who had planned to participate in internships during this spring or summer. Students are a large proportion of the people suffering right now, as their worlds were flipped upside down almost overnight.

Internships are highly-coveted programs where students get hands-on experience in their field of study while earning money, experience and/or school credit. For many students, internships are a first step into the door of professional . In light of the coronavirus, businesses have taken safety precautions and either canceled summer internship programs or moved them to remote programs.

Mary Lou Moffat, director of the Albers Placement Center spoke to how important it is that students know they are not going through this situation alone.

When asked about how students can press forward after this, Moffat said that this is a time to prove resilience and patience. There are still ways to grow and develop over the summer, even if it is not through an internship.

“It’s important to use this time to figure out how we can differentiate ourselves,” Moffat said.

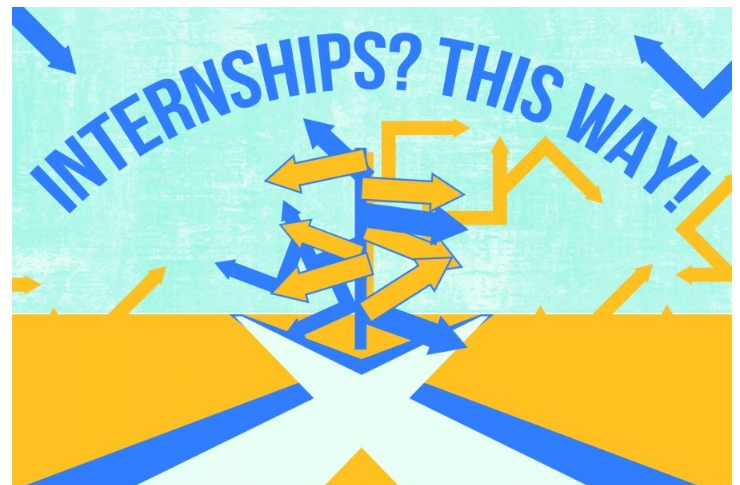
Moffat thinks that students can benefit from this time, as it provides an opportunity for them to reflect on job skills, evaluate their position and ask where they may be lacking. Websites such as Coursera and Udemy serve as a great resource for anybody looking to brush up on professional skills—such as Microsoft applications.

Nada Albader, a senior majoring in civil engineering, lost her internship for the summer. Most of the internships she applied for in Seattle have sent emails out regarding either cancellation or postponements.

“It didn’t really surprise me that much,” Albader has plans to move forward through the disappointment—she even has a job interview with another company this week. For her original summer internship, Albader has been keeping in touch and seeing if she can work in the fall.

In fact, that is what Moffat encourages.

“Let’s chase what’s still out there,” she said. “People want to help right now, and the businesses do not want to be losing their employees and interns—but they are trying to survive.”



Joshua Latief

Moffat recalls a conversation she had with someone at a company recently who explained that it is not an 'us over them' mindset, but they are hit by this too and need to survive.

Per Anderson, a junior civil engineering major, is one of the lucky students that has an internship that was able to continue or be performed remotely. Anderson is currently working with McKinstry on the Seattle U Center for Science Innovation project. He explained that he is sad about the decision to go remote, because it is not the same. However, he recognizes that he is fortunate to have an internship when he knows plenty of people are experiencing a loss.

For those who will be working remotely, Moffat highly recommends setting up a space where you can focus and go to work—and to not forget to reach out to those that you work with. Reaching out to simply say hello or ask questions is a great way to stay connected and integrate yourself into the culture of the company.

While the majority of undergraduate degrees at Seattle U do not require an internship to graduate, most programs will simply give credit for internships, which may count towards your major or satisfy general elective credits. To find out if your program requires an internship, visit the website for your program, and if you are worried about not completing an internship due to the pandemic, contact your program of study.