FIELD EXPERIENCE STUDY IN A TRADITIONAL SETTING

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ABSTRACT: This paper presents a field experience in Fashion Marketing that is available to students at Kansas State University. The functions and responsibilities of the coordinator, the student, and the departmental supervisor are described, as are the evaluation processes that are used.

The field experience is based on the premise that students will obtain realistic views of careers by "on the job" work experiences. Both students and participating retail establishments have indicated that this type of experience is mutually beneficial. It is anticipated that the field experience will continue to grow in popularity for the fashion marketing major.

Internship programs and field experiences are offered in a variety of schools and universities and are as varied as the departments and colleges through which they are offered. This paper presents a description of a Fashion Marketing field experience program available at Kansas State University in the Department of Clothing, Textiles, and Interior Design, which is a traditionally oriented department. The field experience provides the students in the program with an off-campus, nontraditional educational experience.

The general objectives of the field experiences are: (1) to provide students with a realistic view of a career through actual work experience; (2) to provide students with an awareness of the importance of human relations by their interaction with the public, co-workers and supervisory personnel; and (3) to develop an understanding of the op-

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erational procedures and policies relevant to a particular type of retail establishment.

**FASHION MARKETING FIELD EXPERIENCE**

This program was initiated in 1970 and was fully implemented by 1972. The Fashion Marketing major is one of the most popular majors within the department. Approximately thirty-four percent of the students enrolled in the department over the past three years have selected Fashion Marketing as a major. Students have a choice of taking either the field experience or additional supporting courses for their degree. The field experience is restricted to juniors and seniors in the major with a 2.2 cumulative grade point average.

The Fashion Marketing Field Experience is offered only in the fall semester. Eighty-five to ninety percent of the majors elect to take the field experience for five semester hours of credit. The field experience is constructed so that the students take courses specifically designed for the first half of the semester, leaving the last half (approximately 8 weeks) of the semester for a full-time field experience.

The courses for the first half of the semester are "blocked" for the Fashion Marketing majors enrolled in the field experience. There are three courses in the major that are designed to complement the field experience and that are taught so that the appropriate number of class hours prescribed by the credit hours is satisfied.

**FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COORDINATOR**

A faculty person with knowledge and expertise in merchandising is coordinator of the field experience. His/her responsibility is to contact the retail establishments that have expressed an interest in participating in the program or that have previously participated in the programs. An initial meeting with personnel directors of each of the proposed participating establishments is conducted at the start of the fall semester. At that time, the coordinator relates the objectives, policies, etc. of the field experience. The coordinator receives input from the personnel managers, related to the experiences the particular store will provide, the number of students they can reasonably handle, and basic information (e.g. wages, hours, etc.) about the store for the students and the coordinator.