A UNIVERSITY-WIDE MODEL FOR COORDINATING INTERNSHIPS

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ABSTRACT: Colleges and universities of varying enrollments and academic missions can implement a university-wide model for coordinating internships and other credit-generating field experiences by following and/or modifying a program developed at Illinois State University. All credit-generating supervised work experiences in local, state, national and international businesses, agencies, institutions and organizations are planned, administered and supervised at the department level and coordinated through a university-wide central office which functions as a clearing house and resource center for students, faculty, administrators and potential employers. The program does not include those experiences associated with Teacher Education.

"There has got to be a better way" is the cry of numerous colleges and universities across the country when the procedures for planning, organizing and implementing university-wide coordination of internship programs is discussed.

There is another way and it is working effectively for Illinois State University, a multi-purpose institution with an enrollment of more than 19,000 students. Illinois State, with thirty eight academic departments in five colleges, has developed and effectively implemented a university-wide model for coordinating all credit generating supervised work experiences except those associated with Teacher Education. These experiences include Internships, Cooperative Education, Field Work, and all other credit generating work experiences.

The university-wide model at Illinois State, which is easily adaptable to other institutions of varying enrollments and academic missions, did not develop overnight, but gradually, and based upon the expressed needs of faculty, administrators, agency personnel and students.

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The model is presently in its fifth year of operation and has already begun to function as a model for other colleges and universities across the country desiring to coordinate internships and other credit generating field experiences on a university-wide basis.

A primary component of this model, which provides one of the greatest strengths to the model, is the concept of coordination. The entire model is structured on the premise that academic departments control their individual programs while the university-wide program is coordinated, as a service function, by the University Internship Coordinator.

The university-wide model for coordinating internships is depicted as follows:

![Diagram of University Internship Model]

Figure 1: Thirty Eight individual Academic Department Internship Coordinators within each of the five colleges

MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY-WIDE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The university-wide program is coordinated by one full-time University Coordinator and one secretary. The program is coordinated at the academic department level by a department coordinator who ideally has been given re-assigned time to administer the program. Re-assigned time, however, is not given in all cases, and is solely dependent upon the administrative commitment to the program at the department level. Several faculty are still having to use their own time to fulfill responsibilities associated with the program.

Academic departments which require internship experience in order