

# College Internships in the Omaha Area

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# I. Introduction and Summary

The Applied Information Management (AIM) Institute, working with the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, completed a study of Omaha's business use of college interns. The study, conducted in the spring of 2001, surveyed 140 Greater Omaha firms plus academic departments and colleges in the metropolitan area. The study notes that more academic departments are requiring internships for graduation plus more students are seeking internship experiences even though they are not required for their degree.

Meanwhile, intern positions with greater Omaha employers appear to be growing at a less rapid rate. These different growth rates suggest a continued greater supply of intern applicants than positions available. Bringing better balance in the "internship" market would:

- Create more local opportunities for Nebraska students.
- Increase the probability of retaining Nebraska students in the region long-term.
- Provide an "applied dimension" to the educational experience for more students.
- Facilitate the informational conduit between firms and academic departments.

## A. Background

### 1. Employers

Questionnaires designed by AIM were mailed to approximately 1500 Greater Omaha employers. These employers, addresses provided by the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, ranged in size from a single employee to thousands of employees. They included all types of business enterprises and industries. A total of 140 responses were received with:

- 99 firms with 100 or less employees
- 30 firms with 101 to 1000 employees
- 11 firms with over 1000 employees

Seventy-seven percent of the employers were located in Douglas County and 13 percent were in Sarpy County. The balance was in Pottawattamie (3%), Washington (2%) and other adjacent counties (5%).

Slightly over half of the 140 firms in the study employed interns. These firms represented different industry groups. The industry group with the most firms to employ interns was IT - 11.7% of all firms employing interns. Retail/services firms accounted for 10.5% of all firms that hired interns. Appendix I shows the primary industry of firms employing college interns.

## 2. Academic Departments/Colleges

Questionnaires were sent to 50 area colleges and/or academic colleges within area universities. For example, a questionnaire was sent to each academic college within the University of Nebraska at Omaha, but a single questionnaire was sent to Grace University. Appendix II contains the mailing list for all units that received the questionnaire.

Twenty-three (23) of these 50 entities completed and returned the questionnaire. When asked, "*Do any degree programs require an internship as a condition of graduation or grant credit for intern experience?*" 16 of these academic units, or 70% said yes.

## II. Firms Participating in Internships

### A. Employers Hiring Interns

When asked, “Does your company currently provide work-based experience for college internships?” 51% said yes and 49% said no. Participation rates were lower for high school student internships with 24% - yes, and 76% - no. A full review of high school internships and other high school work-based experience will be published later.

This 51% participation rate for college internships varied, however, by size of firm. Table 1 below shows that the percent of firms with interns varies by size of firm.

While nearly half of all firms stated they employed interns, a subsequent question requested the number of interns employed in the last 12 months. Several firms stating they employed interns did not report any intern employment in the last 12 months. The second panel of Table 1 documents the percent of firms that reported actual intern employment in the last 12 months. This difference probably reflects, in part, the lack of information available to the person completing the questionnaire. It was evident in visits with employers in focus groups and other conversations that in many firms, no single individual was familiar with corporate-wide internship initiatives.

Table 1.

	Firms Employing College Interns by Firm Size			
	Total Employment Percent			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
Firms stating they employed interns	37.0%	73.0%	100.0%	51.0%
Firms reporting number of interns employed in last 12 months	36.0%	63.0%	82.0%	46.0%
Ratio of interns to total employment of employers with interns	15.5%	2.0%	0.7%	1.3%
Ratio of interns to total employment of employers with interns	15.5%	2.0%	0.7%	1.3%

Table 1 also shows the ratio of interns employed in the last 12 months, compared to total employment by firm size. These data show an interesting relationship. Fewer of the smaller firms employ interns. However, for those that do, the ratio of employed interns to total employment is quite high. The opposite is true for the largest firms.

Firms were also asked how many interns were employed this year, five years ago and their estimates five years into the future. This question would help document trends, however, many respondents simply did not have either accurate historical data or clear future projections. In many cases, the individual completing the questionnaire was unaware of all their company's practices. Table 2 documents employment levels and trends for internships by firm size. The data indicates some projected growth for most firms. Based on focus group data and other conversations with employers, this data probably understates both the current and future internship employment.

**Table 2.**

	Aggregate Employment and Intern Employment for Firms Reporting Internships by Firm Size			
		Total Employment		
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
Number of firms reporting	33	19	9	61
Aggregate employment for firms reporting internships	952	5,727	30,201	36,880
Interns employed in last 12 months	132	363	223	718
Interns employment projected in 5 years	202	158*	292	652*

\* One non-profit employed 200 interns this year but projects only 30 in five years. A second employer hired 66 interns this year but did not project any interns in 5 years.

## **B. Reasons Employers Hired Interns**

Programs varied, but business considerations were the primary drivers in most cases. These business drivers were virtually the same no matter the size of firm. Table 3 summarizes the top five reasons for employing interns. Appendix III provides details for all 10 options ranked by employers.

Table 3.

Rank of Most Important Reasons to Hire College Intern by Firm Size <i>1 = Most Important</i>				
Reason to Hire Intern	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	Rank			
Long-term recruiting tool	3	1	1	1
Opportunity to test potential employee	1	2	2	2
Part-time/short term hiring	2	5	4	3
Contributing to the community	4	3	5	4
Access to pool of qualified workers	5	4	3	5

### C. Additional Information Required

Firms without interns were asked if they would be willing to consider employing interns in the future. Over three-quarters (76%) said yes. This high level of possible future participation applied to employers of all sizes.

When asked, "*What additional information would you like?*" their responses (Table 4) reveal a lack of information required for sound business decisions.

Table 4.

Additional Information Requested by Firms Not Employing Interns by Firm Size				
Information Requested	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000*	All Firms
	Percent			
Who should I contact?	77%	36%	--	68%
What are interns paid?	79%	54%	--	74%
How much work will it be for me?	68%	27%	--	60%
What training/experience/education will they have?	62%	45%	--	59%
Why should I employ an intern?	55%	36%	--	52%
Other	4%	27%	--	9%

\* All large firms stated they currently employ interns, therefore, they did not respond to this question.

### III. How Employers Participate

#### A. Hiring Departments

Many different departments within a firm may hire interns. The marketing department in 41% of all firms hired interns. Administration, customer service, accounting and IT/networking were also departments that frequently employed interns. Table 5 shows that these corporate functions were inclined to use interns, no matter the size of firm.

Table 5.

Departments Within Firms that Hire College Interns  
by Firm Size

Department	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	Percent			
Administration	27.3%	42.1%	66.7%	37.7%
Accounting	9.1%	31.6%	77.8%	26.2%
Customer Service	24.2%	31.6%	66.7%	32.8%
IT/Networking	15.2%	26.3%	66.7%	26.2%
Manufacturing	3.0%	5.3%	11.1%	4.9%
Marketing	36.4%	31.6%	77.8%	41.0%
Research/Planning	15.2%	15.3%	11.1%	11.5%
Other	57.6%	57.9%	55.6%	57.4%

#### B. Job Duties of College Students

When asked about the job duties of college interns, clerical/secretarial/receptionist functions were most frequently noted (19.9%); followed by computer programming/operations/support/help desk (18.3%); customer service (14.5%) and research (14.0%). Table 6 shows that these are the top four sets of job duties for all sizes of firms. A more complete listing of job duties is shown in Appendix IV.

Table 6.

<b>Job Duties of College Interns by Firm Size</b>				
<b>Job Duties</b>	<b>Total Employment</b>			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	<b>Percent</b>			
Clerical/Secretarial/Receptionist	22.2%	18.8%	17.5%	19.9%
Computer Programming/Operations Support/Help Desk	16.0%	29.2%	12.3%	18.3%
Customer Service	18.5%	12.5%	10.5%	14.5%
Research	17.3%	12.5%	10.5%	14.0%
Retail Sales/Marketing/Cashier	11.1%	6.2%	8.8%	9.1%
Accounting	2.5%	10.4%	10.5%	7.0%

### C. Salaries Paid

Most interns receive payment, however, there were some non-profit employers with unpaid internships. Pay levels generally were higher for the larger firms than for smaller employers. Nearly half of all interns were paid in the \$7.50-\$10.00 hour range. However, 23% were paid over \$10.00 per hour. The survey questionnaire did not allow analysis of pay ranges by job duties of the interns.

Table 7 summarizes pay ranges by size of firms.

Table 7.

<b>Salaries Paid College Interns by Firm Size</b>				
<b>Salaries Paid</b>	<b>Total Employment</b>			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	<b>Percent</b>			
Unpaid	16.3%	23.1%	0.0%	15.7%
Less than \$7.50/hour	25.6%	7.6%	0.0%	15.7%
\$7.50 - \$10.00/hour	39.5%	42.3%	71.4%	45.8%
Over \$10.00/hour	18.6%	26.9%	28.6%	22.9%

#### D. How Are Interns Selected

The way college interns are selected varies considerably from firm to firm. In many firms, the process is not “institutionalized” or operated similar to recruiting full-time employees. For many firms, personal relationships between individuals in the firms and members of the academy are very important. For all firms, 50% of intern selection was based upon “special relationship” with the college placement office/professors or other college contacts. Slightly over one in five (22%) of the interns were recruited by the “same process used for full-time employees.” That is nearly the same response rate as “Ad Hoc - each manager’s approach is different” (21%). Table 8 shows that nearly one half of the largest firms use the same process for interns as for full-time employees - twice the rate for mid-sized firms.

Table 8.

Salaries Paid	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
Same process used for full-time employees	15%	23%	46%	22%
Relationship with placement office, professor or other college contact	61%	50%	18%	50%
Special company process unique to interns	6%	5%	9%	6%
Ad Hoc – each manager’s approach different	18%	23%	27%	21%

#### E. Interns Offered Full-time Jobs

Several firms view internships as a part of their long-term recruiting strategy. The internship allows the employer to become acquainted with the skills and personal attributes of the intern. Likewise, the intern learns about the firm, possible future job opportunities and his/her potential “fit” with the company.

The respondents with college interns were asked to estimate the percent of interns that were eventually offered a full-time job. Table 9 summarizes this data. While these percentages seem lower than some might expect, it is important to remember that many students will have multiple internships through their college career, some employers are only looking for seasonal help, some employers are

providing training experiences but are not recruiting, some students will reject an offer, etc. The study was not designed to measure full-time placement rates specifically for the firm wanting to hire and the student seeking eventual full-time employment.

**Table 9.**

Percent Offered Full-time Jobs	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
0 – 25%	49%	55%	27%	48%
26 – 50%	30%	9%	46%	25%
51 – 75%	11%	18%	9%	13%
Over 75%	10%	18%	18%	14%

## IV. Corporate Culture Regarding Intern Programs

### A. Corporate Policy

When asked the question, “Does your company have a corporate culture that encourages employment of college interns?” 87% of the firms responding to that question said yes. That response rate is similar for all three employer groupings.

Those companies that answered yes, were then asked to describe the nature of that corporate culture. The data in Table 10 shows that few firms have “formal corporate policies” (16%). This data seems to suggest that while corporate policies tend to “enable” or are friendly toward the recruitment and employment of college interns, they are not necessarily pro active - at the corporate level - in developing aggressive intern programs and strategies. Certainly some firms have highly targeted programs for employing students in law, students in medicine, IT, engineering, etc.; however, in focus groups some of those same firms may not use interns in other business functions such as marketing, accounting, etc.

Table 10.

Nature of Corporate Culture	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	Percent			
Formal corporate policies	15%	17%	18%	16%
Department/unit manager practice supported and encouraged by senior management	31%	39%	36%	34%
Department/unit manager practice with little senior management support	3%	0%	0%	1%
Informal corporate practice	46%	35%	27%	41%
Other	5%	9%	18%	8%

## **B. Company/Industry/Regulatory/Business Reasons Not to Employ Interns**

Twenty-nine percent of all firms reported some company/industry/regulatory or business reasons that prevented use of interns. When these firms were asked to document the reasons, three were given:

- Business requirements prohibited use of untrained professionals (29%)
- Administrative overhead/other costs (29%)
- Work not adapted to interns (41%)

These firms that reporting reasons that prevented use of interns did not, however, list employment caps/freezes, benefits administration or union regulations/issues as a deterrent.

For many firms the constraints to hiring an intern in one department or division may not be a constraint to other units of the company. For example, an intern may not be appropriate for a consulting firm that required experienced people for contract or consulting assignments. That same firm, however, may be able to use an intern in the accounting or IT department.

## V. Focus Groups

Three focus groups and a special meeting of the Human Resources Association of the Midlands (HRAM) contributed substantially to the understanding of current intern practices by area employers. One focus group was composed of firms with no interns, a second focus group was structured for firms with intern programs. The third group had both employers with and without interns.

### A. Focus Group - Firms With No Interns

Employers with no interns had a variety of challenges as they considered internship programs. Consulting firms and others providing professional services have little opportunity to use interns in the delivery of their primary services. If the firm is small, there are also limited back office opportunities that can be filled by an intern.

In other cases, however, individuals in the focus group were willing to advocate for interns in their company but faced a variety of challenges.

For the firm with no intern program, the processes, relationships with colleges and attitudes within the firm regarding interns, can present a barrier. In one case, the HR department was asked to start an intern program but the department managers were less motivated than HR.

Some company attitudes were also not conducive to intern hiring. To illustrate, one participant noted, *“My boss needs to get over the idea that an intern is a special position.”* The idea of integrating the intern into normal workflow was a foreign idea. Another problem was, *“My boss viewed the idea of an intern as hurting the bottom line. But I’m convinced it was a win-win situation for us.”*

In another case, the HR and the training departments were to initiate an intern program but the training advocate left the firm. In many firms, individuals advocate for interns within their department or firm. If that champion leaves or is transferred, the intern program frequently suffers from lack of leadership and advocacy.

Other problems were also noted such as a desire to promote from within. In another case, the majority of the jobs did not require a college education, so opportunities for college trained interns were limited. In another firm, however, a

community college student intern in the construction trades advanced much more rapidly than his less educated peers.

Finally, one employer wanted a “turn key” solution for starting and implementing their intern program. That request for forms, procedures and planning is not available in the community today. The request for counsel and help in establishing a company-wide program is appropriate, particularly for the nearly 65% of all small firms without interns.

## **B. Focus Group - Firms With Interns**

Focus group participants with interns were positive about the experience. Several firms, in particular, had highly developed programs designed to attract highly educated and skilled employees to their firm. These firms were using internships as a cornerstone for recruiting key long-term professionals. It was interesting to observe that some of these highly successful strategies were limited to a department within the company. Other departments, in that same firm, may not use internships at all. In fact, there was one employee from a larger Omaha company that stated their firm did not hire interns, when from other sources it was evident the IT division in that same firm employs about 30 interns per year.

Firms with focused intern programs frequently had detailed and specific recruiting and interview strategies to attract the type of intern they desired. In addition to specific academic-based skills, they were looking for other attributes such as:

- personable
- independent
- motivated
- professional
- intelligence
- ambition
- eagerness
- willingness to work

Corporate policies toward internships was as varied for members of this focus group as it was for survey respondents. For example, interns were paid -

- from the president’s budget
- from the training budget
- from board approved funding
- from departmental budgets (most common)

These firms also had variety in the duration of internships. One firm started with college sophomores with the goal of hiring the best individuals in successive summers until graduation, when the intern was considered for full-time employment. Several firms had summer interns, as well as internships through the school year. Some had co-op programs, but these require a unique match between student and firm needs.

Clearly defined goals and objectives for the intern program, in general, and specifically for each student, were noted as a key to success. That process involves faculty to assure academic requirements are met. It also provides a conduit back to the academic department concerning the issues and content that is important to the firm.

The agenda of the HRAM (Human Resources Association of the Midlands) meeting incidentally revealed one of the greatest challenges to the community concerning interns - "*Whom do I call?*" At that meeting, there were several dozen employers and most of the area schools. Special speakers and a panel of firms were instructive in defining needs and opportunities.

Likewise, the panel of representatives from three universities provided detail about their programs to place students. That panel of three universities had four speakers - one university had two different offices assisting in the placement of interns. Representatives of other area schools were present but were not represented on the panel.

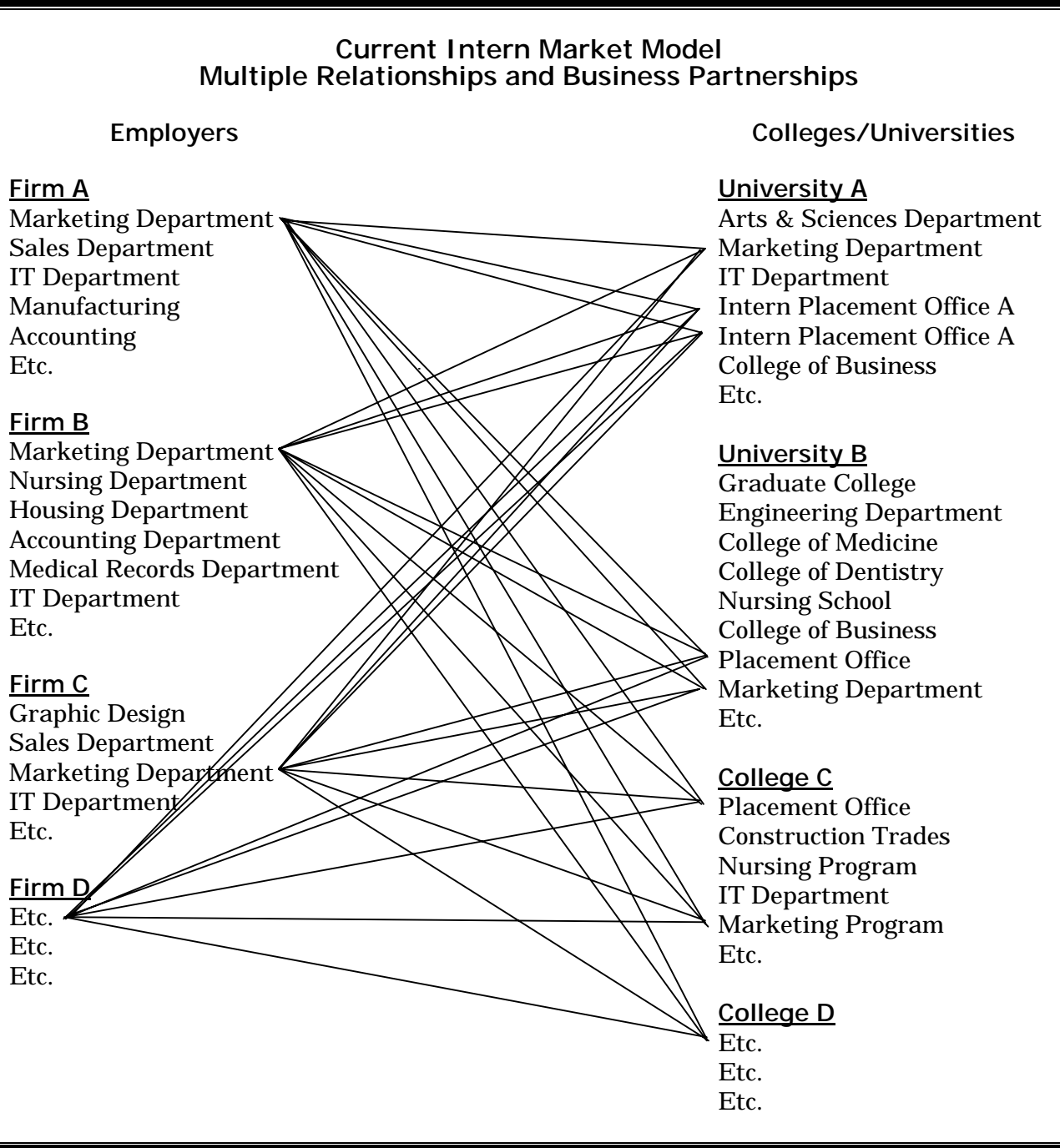
The problem: *How do I know whom to call for what?* It is impossible for the colleges to know all the firms, their department managers, who hires interns, who doesn't, who would like to hire interns but doesn't know how, etc.

Likewise, whom does the employer call? What school has what, what department has students I would be interested in, what's the name and phone number of the intern placement office(s). How do I build relationships, with whom, etc?

The problem is many as illustrated in Figure 1. There are so many options. There is so much research to do, especially if you don't already have the unique relationship in place. Even if you have the unique relationship, the research starts over again if one of the key partners leaves.

The combination and permutations of individuals and phone numbers is staggering.

Figure 1.



For 140 companies and 50 academic entities, the potential combination of relationships is staggering.

## VI. College and University Internship Programs

Questionnaires were distributed to 50 different collegiate entities (see Appendix II). Questionnaires were sent to each of the academic colleges within area universities. For example, 10 different colleges at UNO received questionnaires, as did seven colleges/schools at Creighton University and 11 at UNL. Smaller colleges - Dana College and Grace University - received a single questionnaire. Twenty-three different entities responded.

### A. Support of Internships

When asked, *“Does your academic college support student internships as a part of the educational experience?”* all 23 respondents answered yes. That support was provided in a variety of ways.

Table 11.

College Support of Internships		
Services Provided	Providing Services	
	Number	Percent
Formal program in placement office or career center	12	52%
Special office to support students at the college or university level	7	30%
Each department has their own plans	15	65%
Each professor provides support individually	6	27%
Other	3	13%

This data revealed that every academic entity has one or more programs to support internships. Thirteen of the entities had two or more programs available.

When asked, *“Why do you participate in internship programs?”* the predominate answer was *“to help prepare students for careers.”* The schools were asked to rank reasons for internships. The top four reasons are shown in Table 12. Appendix V shows a complete list of reasons and their ranking.

Table 12.

<b>Reasons for Internships</b>				
Reasons for Internships	Number of Academic Units That Ranked			Weighted Avg Ranking
	1	2	3	
Help prepare students for career	20	3	--	1.13
Logical extension of classroom curriculum	2	8	6	2.25
To help business community	--	4	5	2.55
Help student build resume	--	6	1	2.14

### B. Internships Required for Graduation

Of the 23 academic entities reporting, 15 required internships for graduation. These programs will create a constant and growing demand (if enrollments grow) for intern experiences. The 15 programs created an estimated 1790 internships five years ago, 2068 this year, and a projected 2420 in five years. These favorable growth rates (16-17% for each period, respectively) are not rapid.

When looking at different academic disciplines, growth rates for student internships vary as shown in Table 13.

Table 13.

<b>Growth in Internships Required for Graduation</b>	
Academic Area	Growth Over the Next 5 Years
Educational occupations	13%
Business/computer science	45%
Social sciences	40%
Medical professions	17%

### C. Growth in All Internships

Not all students are required to seek internships because of a degree requirement. Many desire internships for financial and resume building reasons. In addition, many programs offer academic credit for internships even though they many not be required for a degree.

All but one respondent expected internships to be more important in the next five years. In addition, 21 of the academic respondents estimated annual growth rates for all internships over the next five years. These annual growth rates, shown in Table 14 are relatively dramatic. Using midpoint values, the weighted average growth rate is projected to be 13% compounded annually.

Table 14.

	Projected Annual Growth Rates					
	0-5%	6-10%	11-15%	16-20%	21-25%	Over 25%
Number of entities* projecting this growth	4	6	2	5	1	3
Percent of entities projecting this growth	19%	29%	10%	24%	5%	14%

\* Note: Only 21 entities estimated future growth rates for all interns.

#### D. Business Response From an Academic Perspective

Business response - from an academic perspective - has been generally good. In response to a question designed to measure the degree of difficulty in securing an internship, the college respondents seemed to indicate adequate opportunities as reported in Table 15.

Table 15.

How Difficult Is It to Secure an Internship	
Responses	Percent
Number of opportunities exceed number of students available	22%
Number of opportunities in balance with number of students available	30%
Opportunities available but require extensive search by student or school	17%
More students than opportunity, no matter how much effort is extended	17%
Other	13%

It may be that the very tight labor market in the metropolitan area in recent years has contributed to this condition. Intern opportunities might be more difficult if the level of economic activity slows. Also, the study did not measure what percent of the student internships were out of the region. Conversations with faculty suggest that opportunities for local internships for some specialized disciplines are not available.

The academic community also judged that the quality of the intern experience of the student was generally good. Eighty-two percent of the respondents noted that *“Jobs are normally a very good match with significant academic and applied value to the student.”* Only 14 percent felt intern quality was “spotty” with some positions a good match and others outside the students’ area of study. Only 5 percent believed that internships rarely taxed the students’ ability.

## VII. Summary and Conclusions

The academic and business communities, in the metropolitan area, are deeply engaged in internships as a part of the academic experience of area students. Employers are primarily driven by business reasons, while the academic community is seeking to provide applied experiences and extend the academic background of the students. These are compatible objectives for both communities.

The majority of interns are paid, and over 80% of the academic respondents reported the jobs are normally a very good match with significant academic and applied value to the student.

Internships, as reported in focus groups, provide a conduit between the firm and the classroom that is valuable for both, as each respond to changing industry needs and conditions. The result is more relevant curriculum and more relevant future employees.

The way employers use interns varies considerable. The range is from non-use to a primary recruiting strategy for future key full-time professional staff. These later programs tended to be departmental strategies that are highly structured ongoing programs - frequently starting with undergraduates and cultivating the student through their career. Some firms use similar strategies to attract minority students to their employee pool. These same firms, however, will frequently have other departments in the firms that do not employ interns at all. These findings illustrate that many employers do not have formal corporate strategies toward internships.

While most indicate that the *“corporate culture is friendly towards internships”* but it is up to individual departments or HR to develop, implement, maintain and pay for the intern program. To some extent, the academic internship initiatives are similar - one college or professor in the university develops an effective program, while others are more passive. These market conditions - in both the firm and academia - have led to a “relationship based” market to facilitate movement of interns from the classroom to firm.

These models work until the advocate or champion leaves. In the firm, if the intern champion leaves a department - that department may lose its incentive for internships. They may also lose access because the link with the supplying college is broken. The same conditions also happen when the dean, department head or professor leaves.

Perhaps a greater challenge is the firm with no intern program. Many of these employers would take interns if they had an operational program and contacts. Their questions included, *“Who do I contact? What are interns paid? How prepared will they be? What must I do?”* Advice and coaching by either the college or others could increase intern opportunities substantially - particularly for the smallest firms or departments in larger companies that have no formal programs.

While the market seems to be in relative balance today, there are several new market considerations, over the next five years. The academic community is projecting the supply of students will grow significantly. This growth comes as programs requiring internships increase, growth in students seeking internships for financial and resume building reasons, plus more departments offering academic credit for the applied intern experience.

If the economic activity should slow, the difficulty in securing an internship could increase for the student. In addition, growth rates in opportunities by local employers appear to be slower than the supply of students projected by the 23 academic entities in the study. This growth will be faster for business/computer science than for some other professions.

Finally, the problem of multiple names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses the firm must learn to tap the supply of interns at area academic institutions is daunting. Likewise, the number of employers, names, phone number and e-mail addresses is equally daunting to the student and the student placement offices. The “relationship” characteristics of this market is efficient only if you have the right set of relationships. By definition, this “relationship” type market will be highly inefficient for most firms and students. The community would be better served by a more efficient market mechanisms for placing interns.

## VIII. Recommendations

If one accepts the premise that firms, schools, students and the community would be better served by a more efficient and functional internship market, then some recommendations are appropriate.

### A. Firm Level Recommendations

#### 1. Board/Corporate Policies

The data suggests that the management of firms hiring interns are generally encouraging and supportive of these activities. The data also suggests that successful programs largely rely on departmental initiatives and individual managers that embrace intern programs. There are relatively few firms with executive committee/board level corporate policy commitments to foster internships. Intern programs are not a key part of corporate-wide personnel strategies. It is recommended that more boards and executive committees develop intern strategies at the corporate level, with appropriate encouragement, policies, and a named “corporate champion” that encourages all departmental/unit managers to build internship strategies into their departmental/unit plans.

#### 2. Best Practices/Community Forum

There are many small and large firms that have excellent programs that are firm-wide or within an individual department. These employers are a rich source of “best practices” examples. It is recommended that a community-wide conference on internships be held for senior officers and managers to discuss the opportunities and best practices.

### B. Schools

#### 3. Intern Job Fair

Job fairs are routinely used to attract employees to a firm. It is in the best interest of schools to help place students into intern positions. It is recommended that area schools jointly host an “intern job fair” for area employers, in which all academic units present and promote an understanding of their programs, how students are prepared and names of students available and desiring an internship. Such an annual event would facilitate communications between business and the academy, while helping place students.

#### 4. More Information

Over half the firms surveyed had no interns. Over three-quarters of these firms, however, would like additional information. The survey and focus groups suggest there are opportunities for substantial increased participation with good business answers to appropriate business questions such as how, why, when, how much, etc. about interns. It is recommended that school placement offices focus on this general need. It is further recommended that annual seminars be designed for these firms that focus on their questions, provide best practice examples, model programs, and generally coach and encourage firms to employ interns.

### C. Community

#### 5. Web site/Intern market

It is in the community's best interest to keep the students Nebraska educates in Nebraska. Internships are one of many strategies to address this objective. The market for interns in the community is highly defused. There are hundreds of firms, individuals, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. No student or placement office can make an informed decision because there are too many points of contact.

Meanwhile, there are scores of universities, colleges within universities, departments within colleges, professors and placement offices. There are hundreds of names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. No employer or HR office can make an informed decision because there are too many points of contact.

It is recommended that a community web site targeting internships be developed. The web site would have a single address (URL) that all employees, students, faculty and administrators would know. This single URL would take the "many to many" problem down to "many to one" for employers, students, faculty, and administrators. The site would include:

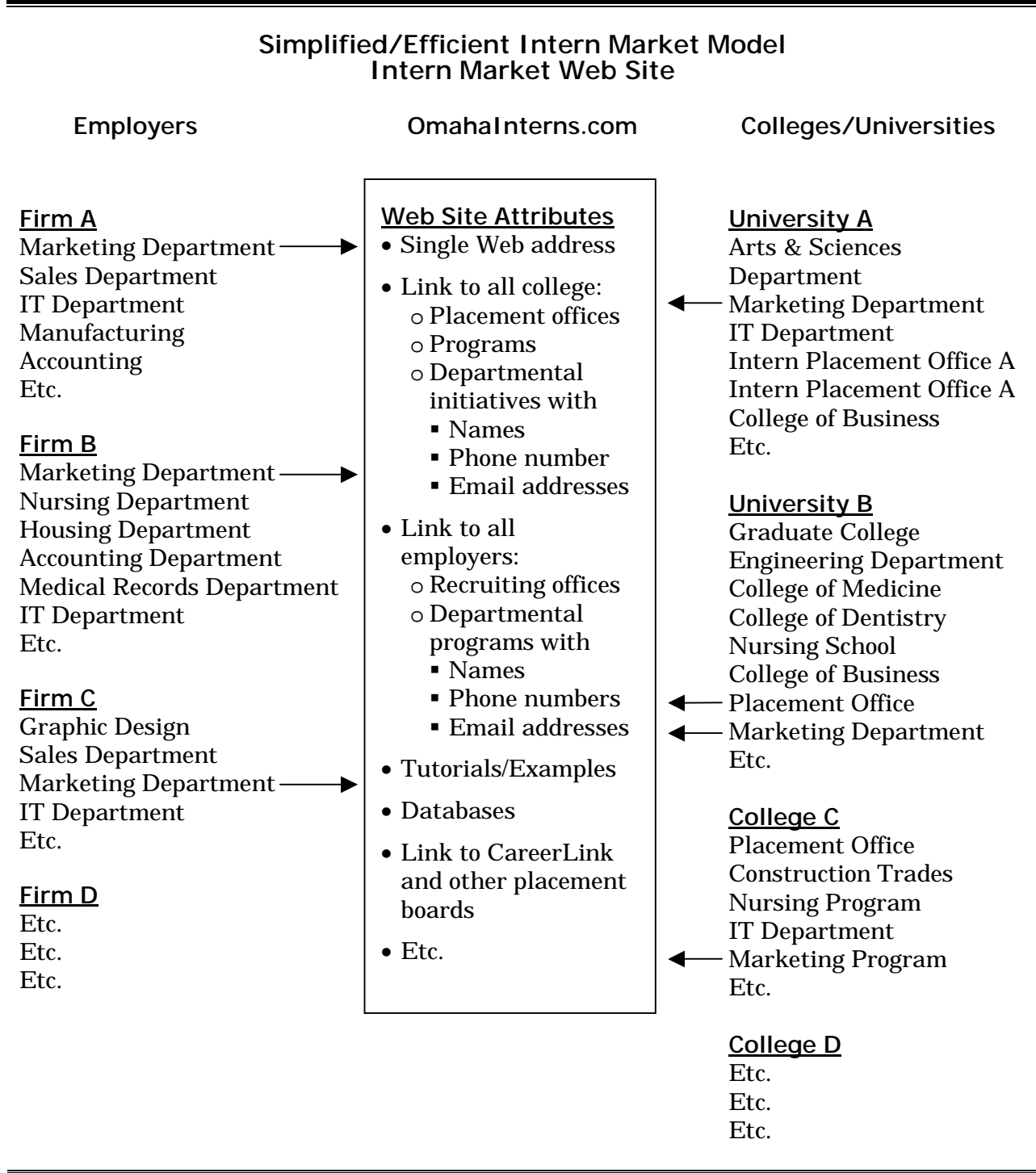
- Names, numbers, e-mails of all college and university placement offices
- Departmental programs requiring/encouraging internships
- Directory of students
- Names, numbers, e-mail addresses of firms employing interns
- Examples of best practices
- Tutorials on "*How do I start?*"; "*How do I encourage other departments?*"; etc.
- Links to college and business web sites
- Etc.

The web site, illustrated in Figure 2, would be designed to support and facilitate current firm and university strategies, not replace them.

## **6. Community Advocate**

While such a site can be designed to allow colleges and firms that provide the data to keep the site current and relevant, it will still require a full-time community advocate/champion to manage and maintain direction and focus for the site. This champion would advocate, encourage, prod, explain, introduce, inform, organize, monitor, etc. to keep the site current and facilitate dialog, communication, currency and relevancy between all parties. This champion must be neutral - not owned by any firm, industry, school or program. A model to initially fund the program must be developed but the program should become financially self-sustaining, following a two or three year start-up period.

Figure 2.



For 140 companies and 50 academic entities, the potential combination of relationships is reduced dramatically.

## Appendix I

### Primary Industry of Firms Employing College Interns By Firm Size

Department	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	Percent of All Firms			
Construction	8.4%	13.3%	0%	8.6%
Marketing/Distributing	8.4%	10.0%	0%	8.0%
Finance/Insurance	8.4%	3.3%	16.7%	8.0%
Education/Training	8.4%	6.7%	0%	7.4%
Architecture/Engineering	5.9%	10.0%	0%	6.2%
IT	15.1%	3.3%	0%	11.7%
Healthcare	3.4%	6.7%	25.0%	5.6%
Professional Services	2.5%	6.7%	0%	3.1%
Business Services	5.9%	6.7%	0%	5.6%
Non-Profit/Social Services	4.2%	3.3%	0%	3.7%
Retail/Services	10.9%	6.7%	16.7%	10.5%
Hotel/Resort/Hospitality	2.5%	3.3%	8.3%	3.7%
Other	16.0%	20.0%	33.3%	17.9%

Note:

- IT includes Computers/Electronics; Information Processing; Information Technology Systems; Internet; Software; and Telecommunications
- Healthcare includes Healthcare/Wellness/Fitness and Pharmaceuticals/Medical
- Professional Services includes Legal and Environmental Services
- Business Services includes Advertising; Consulting/Economic Development; Marketing/Telemarketing; Printing/Publishing; and Staffing
- Retail/Services includes Food/Beverage; Retail; Services and Entertainment/Sports
- Other includes Aerospace/Defense; Machinery; Transportation; Utilities and Other Industries

## Appendix II

### Mailing List for College Intern Questionnaire

Academic Unit	'Yes' Responses Received
<b>University of Nebraska at Omaha</b>	
College of Arts and Sciences	X
College of Business Administration	X
College of Engineering & Technology	
College of Education	X
College of Fine Arts	
College of IS&T	
College of Public Affairs & Community Service	X
College of International Studies and Programs	
College of Continuing Studies	
College of Graduate Studies	X
<b>University of Nebraska Medical Center</b>	
College of Nursing	
College of Pharmacy	
College of Medicine	
School of Allied Health Professions	
College of Dentistry - Lincoln Campus	X
<b>University of Nebraska - Lincoln</b>	
College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources	
College of Architecture	
College of Arts & Sciences	
College of Business Administration	X
College of Engineering & Technology	X
College of Fine Arts & Performing Arts	
College of Graduate Studies	
College of Human Resources & Family Services	X
College of Journalism & Mass Communications	
College of Law	
Teachers College	
<b>Creighton University</b>	
College of Arts & Sciences	X
College of Business Administration	X
College of Dentistry	
School of Law	X
School of Medicine	
School of Nursing	X
School of Pharmacy & Allied Health Professions	
<b>Metropolitan Community College</b>	
Associate Dean, Academic Planning	
Associate Dean, Curriculum Delivery	
Associate Dean, Curriculum Design	
Associate Dean, Faculty Relations	
<b>Bellevue University</b>	
College of Arts & Sciences	
College of Professional Studies	X
College of Business Administration	X
Distributive Learning	
<b>Iowa Western Community College</b>	
Intern Office	X
Div Dean of Health/Sport Science	X
Div Dean of Math, Science & Engineering Technology	
Div Dean of Social Sciences & Human Services	
Div Dean of Business & Information Technology	
Div Dean of Agriculture, Transportation & Industrial Technology	X
Div Dean of Fine Arts/Communications Arts/Media Studies	X
<b>College of Saint Mary</b>	
	X
<b>Grace University</b>	
	X
<b>Clarkson College</b>	
	X
<b>Nebraska Methodist College</b>	
	X
<b>Dana College</b>	
	X
<b>Midland Lutheran College</b>	
	X

## Appendix III

### Rank of Most Important Reasons to Hire College Interns by Firm Size

*1 = Most Important, 13 = Least Important*

Reasons to Hire Interns	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	Rank			
Long-term recruiting tool	3	1	1	1
Opportunity to test potential employee	1	2	2	2
Part-time/short term hiring	2	5	6	3
Contributing to community	4	3	5	4
Access to pool of qualified workers	5	4	3	5
To ease local labor shortage	6	8	4	6
Good public relations	7	9	6	7
Improve public education system	9	6	6	8
Increased training is necessary	8	10	NR	9
Other	10	7	NR	10
Access to pre-screened applicants	13	12	6	11
Encouragement from industry groups	12	11	NR	12
Reduce benefits expenses	11	13	NR	13

NR = No response reported

## Appendix IV

### Job Duties of College Interns by Firm Size

Job Duties	Total Employment			
	0-100	101-1,000	Over 1,000	All Firms
	Percent			
Clerical/Secretarial/Receptionist	22.2%	18.8%	17.5%	19.9%
Computer Programming/Operations Support/Help Desk	6.0%	29.2%	12.3%	18.3%
Customer Service	18.5%	12.5%	10.5%	14.5%
Research	17.3%	12.5%	10.5%	14.0%
Retail Sales/Marketing/Cashier	11.1%	6.2%	8.8%	9.1%
Accounting	2.5%	10.4%	10.5%	7.0%
Cook/Food Prep/Kitchen Help/ Wait staff	1.2%	2.1%	10.5%	4.3%
Assembly/Shipping & Receiving/ Warehouse	3.7%	0%	7.0%	3.8%
Managerial	1.2%	2.1%	7.0%	3.2%
Sales/Telemarketing	3.7%	0%	3.5%	2.7%
Construction/Driver	2.5%	6.2%	0%	2.7%
Other	0%	0%	1.8%	0.5%

## Appendix V

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### Reasons for Internships

Reasons for Internships	Number of Academic Units That Ranked			Weighted Avg Ranking
	1	2	3	
Help prepare students for career	20	3	--	1.13
Extension of classroom curriculum	2	8	6	2.25
Helps student build resume	--	6	1	2.14
Local businesses want these activities	1	1	2	2.25
Always part of the curriculum	--	1	3	2.75
Employers require an intern experience	--	2	2	2.50
Good public relations	--	--	3	3.00
Other	--	--	1	3.00

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