Hey First Years! Internship season is upon you – I know many of you may already have your internships lined up already, but if you don’t, please feel free to peruse the info and tips I have collected from my own internship search. Last year, I felt like I needed a lot of guidance and advice regarding which internships to interview for, how to interview via skype/phone, and how to prepare for them. All I have done here is compiled information from the internship websites, along with helpful tips and tricks that we have learned from our internship search last year. If you are feeling anxious like I was – this packet was made for you 😊. Please know the rest of the 2nd years and I are very invested in your internship search and are always here if you need us!

What kind of Internships are there?

There are LOTS of different kinds of internships – I have listed HESA’s most frequented internship organizations here as well as what they are and why they are valuable to you.

**NODA (National Orientation Director Association)**

- Website: nodaweb.org

- The NODA Internship Program matches orientation, transition and retention professionals and host institutions with energetic, dedicated students looking to expand their orientation experience and connections. NODA Internships take place during the summer months. Currently, no academic year NODA internships are offered.

- NODA internships are designed to:
  - Facilitate the matching of motivated, quality students with challenging, exciting orientation positions at NODA member institutions across U.S and Canada.
  - Encourage the renewal of our profession by creating employment opportunities for students interested in gaining orientation, transition, and retention experience.

- **Why a NODA Internship?**
  - Interns gain valuable insight into varied methods of planning and implementing orientation, transition and retention programs. Interns have the opportunity to be involved in many different aspects of orientation, to expand their knowledge base and understanding of the diversity in programs, to develop an extensive support and mentor base, and to experience a variety of related areas. Through providing an internship experience, the host institution/program has the opportunity to gain from the perspective and background of an enthusiastic and fresh viewpoint on specific projects as well as in program implementation. The short term nature can also provide an economical way to increase the number of staff during a busy time of year,
while increasing the ideas, the experience and the connections for your program.
- Application open December 8, 2014.

**ACUHO-I (Association of College and University Housing Officers – International)**
- Website: [http://internship.acuho-i.org/](http://internship.acuho-i.org/)
- The ACUHO-I Housing Internship Program is one of the most prestigious and competitive internship opportunities available in student affairs. The program provides students invaluable real-world work experience that can be applied to their current coursework. At the same time, institutions that host interns benefit from an infusion of new staff who assist with training, conference management, special projects, program development, and more.
  - Basically, you can gain experience in housing, conferences, leadership and staff development, assessment and more! This internship is definitely not just for housing folks and does not necessarily mean you will be required to serve on duty like in the academic year.
- Application open now until January 13, 2015

**National Association of Campus Activities**
- Website: [https://internship.naca.org/](https://internship.naca.org/)
- The NACA® Internship Program will engage students outside their campuses and NACA events, provide experiential opportunities in business and college settings, and develop meaningful personal and business networks among all parties. The Internships can last up to 12 weeks from mid-May to August. Organizations that host an intern will provide hands-on experience in the fields of student affairs, business management or entertainment.
  - Ryan Day and I both had NACA internships last summer – these are brand spanking new and so the number of schools who are offering internships is drastically smaller than NODA or ACUHO-I hosts. These are wonderful if you are interested in campus programming and may be less structured than other internships as they are just gaining popularity.
- Applications open December 8 until January 15, 2015.
**From the NODA website – I do not take credit for these wonderful tips!**

**Advice for Students Topics**

1. Reading Internship Postings
2. Internship Application Timeline
3. Tips for Applying (including that "where needed" option)
4. Phone Interviews
5. Making the Transition
6. Preparing for your Internship
7. Getting to Know Your Supervisor
8. Thoughts from Past Interns
9. Advice from Internship Hosts

1. Reading Internship Postings

**Dates flexible:** Although many applications will say that dates are flexible, the amount of flexibility can vary considerably. One host site may be flexible by a couple days and another may be flexible by a week or more, and some may be flexible at the beginning or the end of the internship experience. A good rule of thumb is to look at internship opportunities where you would be able to stay (almost) the entire time. Know when you need to be on campus for graduate school responsibilities. You will have a chance to list your availability dates on your application so hosts will have an idea of when you will be available, but applying for intern positions where you will miss a week or more may put you out of the running. For the opportunities that say dates are not flexible, they are not; however, if a posting says it is, you decide if it’s worth the risk...it may pay off! BUT BE SURE to discuss in any interview where you might need flexibility --- don’t leave anything left to assumptions.

**Number of other interns:** This section will let you know whether or not you will have a colleague for the summer that will be fulfilling a similar position or working directly with you. You will be able to get an idea of whether this is another intern by looking at the "Number of Positions Available" section. If there is only one available in that section but the position states there are others working with this position, it likely means you will be working with another student/graduate student who already works for that program.

**Meals, housing, room and board, and other benefits:** Most hosts will provide meals while the orientation program is in session, some may provide an extra meal plan, and some may not be able to offer anything. Room and board is usually, but not always, provided for interns during their internship, yet if you are hoping to stay longer, you may need to find your own housing. Accommodations vary greatly, of course, but remember: you will sleep there and it is only one summer (so you don’t need to pack up your whole life to move there). While these benefits may be really nice, they are usually looked on by interns as icing on the cake—your internship and overall experience are really what matter in the long run. If these are NOT provided by the experience, be sure to ask about options in any interview.
**Job description:** Arguably the most important part of the host’s information. Read it carefully and be certain the responsibilities are things you would be willing and interested in doing. This is a great section to clarify during a phone interview. You don’t necessarily need to have experience doing every aspect of the description, but you should be interested in performing that duty. Those who don’t provide it as part of the job may be able to assist you in finding affordable housing, or may offer meal plans for purchase, for example.

**Qualifications and experiences:** Some will require that students have completed their first year of graduate school and others will not (this is also located in the “Position Requirement” section). If you are an undergraduate student, you may need to be flexible with your choices for the summer, but there are opportunities for you!

**Institution location and characteristics:** Take your internship as an opportunity to go somewhere different and exciting. Remember that you are not only going to a different institution, but (most likely) a new town or city. Along with looking at the institution’s Web site, perhaps consider the city’s visitor information. Look for internships that will provide you with a different experience than what you already know (interact with parents, plan a fall welcome, work at a small/large school, etc.) The new opportunities are endless!

**Web site:** Look at the institution’s Web site, but also be certain to look at the orientation program’s information/housing website/campus activities board website. You will get a great idea of what incoming students are seeing before they arrive on campus, as well as learn some basics about what these different offices offer to students.

****Note:** Be sure to organize any notes you take by school. You want to demonstrate that you have done your research ahead of time, but make sure you are talking and asking questions about the right school at the right time.

2. **Internship Application Timeline**

(Be sure to review the official timeline for all the details)

**December/January**
Potential candidates review posted positions
Candidate submit application, including an updated resume, online application and application fee.
Host receives candidate pool (applications and resumes)
Host screens and interviews candidates in the timeframe allotted (typically by phone)

**February**
Host makes initial offers (following timeline given)
Candidate accepts or declines offer(s)

**March/April**
Agreement letters and contracts are exchanged.
A great relationship kicks off and the internship experience begins!

3. **Tips for Applying**

Consider where you are **ABLE** to go. This means take transportation, finances, and geographical destination into consideration. Understand that the more open minded and willing to travel you
are the higher your chances for an internship. Really take time to read the job description. Understand what you are playing for because you have a limited amount of schools that you can contact! Specific characteristics to consider:

- **Type.** Be conscious of factors such as control (public/private), religious affiliation, and type (liberal arts/research/community college, etc). Working at different institutions allowed me to experience the varying structures and environments present at each.

- **Size.** Experience firsthand the balance between generalization and specialization at institutions of various sizes. Reflecting on my internships, I now understand my own preferences better and have determined the institution size that best fits me.

- **Location.** Consider spending your summer in a new area of the country—it is only for a couple months! Completing internships in New York and California exposed me to unfamiliar regions and greater levels of personal independence.

- **Responsibilities.** Look for a position that has familiar aspects, but that will also provide challenging opportunities for professional growth. My second internship, focused on parent programs and best practices research, was vastly different, but just as valuable, as the direct training and supervision I had with orientation leaders during my first internship.

The best thing to do is write down exactly what you expect from the internship, and how that is going to look (big vs. small; private vs. public, etc.). Identify the top characteristics you want to see in an institution and internship, then what you want to gain. It will be your checklist to either keep or not keep them on the list when sorting preference.

**NODA -- What about that "Where Needed in Region ___" option?**

There 'where needed' option essentially opens you up to many more opportunities within the NODA internship program. By selecting this option, you give NODA permission to share your information with institutions that may not have had enough candidates apply to their internship positions, which in turn will give you a higher chance of receiving an internship. This option would be best to choose if you know that you want to have an internship, on lets say, the east coast, but you don't have a preference of institution. By choosing this option, you will be paired with institutions in Region IX (see the [NODA Regional Map](#) for a breakdown of regions) that didn't receive as many direct candidates, which gives you a higher chance of getting places in an internship.

**4. Phone Interviews**

**The basics of phone interviews.**

For some people, this is the most difficult type of interview. The good and the bad of it (all depends on your perspective) is that the interviewer(s) cannot read non-verbal cues, do not know if you have notes to refer to, and do not know whether you are wearing a suit—or pajamas. Still, remember that this is the hosts’ first impression of you so use the interview to inform the host of your expectations and interest for the position.

Don’t neglect steps you would take with other types of interviews: do your research on the institution prior to your phone interview (look for the orientation website, admissions site, student
affairs site, read posting thoroughly, etc) in order to have an idea of the types of students who attend and the number of students who attend

Questions to consider in preparing for the phone interview
Think about (and even write out) answers to some of the following questions. While these exact questions may not be asked, the answers you create could be applied to other questions.

- Describe yourself and why you are interested in an orientation internship at (insert institution name).
- Describe a time when you took initiative to ensure a project got completed.
- How do you keep yourself organized? What is your best time management skill?
- Describe a time when you felt you very stressed. How did you find balance?
- Describe a moment in your life when you were most proud of yourself. How did you get to that point?
- How do you handle conflict? Describe a time when you disagreed with a teammate and how the situation was resolved.
- Describe your past advisory/supervisory experience.
- How do you gain respect from your team? What is your leadership style?
- What steps would you take to get to know your staff?
- What do you do to unwind?

Tips for the phone interview

DO

- Prepare for the interview. Type or write down key things that you want to remember during the interviews and use these ideas. (Remember, they cannot see you!)
- Dress however you feel comfortable. Some will recommend that you wear work clothes or a suit as if you were interviewing in person because it makes you feel more professional. However, if you feel more comfortable being informal, dress however you want—but remember, always interview as if it’s a formal setting. (Therefore, make sure you won’t be interrupted by another phone call, a dog barking, a loud roommate, etc.)
- Write down people’s names. This tip is especially helpful if you are interviewing with more than one person. This will help you make it more of a personalized interview and the interviewers will be impressed if you address them by name.
- Always use examples to support your answers. For example, “I find working as a team a benefit for a project that needs to get done. You can incorporate others’ ideas to make a better solution or product. For example, I served on the Orientation Advisory Committee where we had to come up with a new way of scheduling students into their classes. I felt that experience... etc.”
- Have a copy of your resume with you. If the interviewers refer to it, you won’t have to go searching for it. This way, you will easily understand what they are commenting on or asking about.
• **Prepare some questions of your own.** Consider "day in the life" types of questions, timeline of program, expectations of intern(s), living arrangement questions, etc.

• **Prepare and have resources nearby.** You can never do too much research prior to an interview, and the benefit of having one over the phone is you can have those notes laid out in front of you. Keep your resume nearby, prepare bullet points to common questions (accomplishments? strengths? weaknesses?), have the institution’s website loaded, and jot down notes and questions that seem important.

• **Show emotion through your voice.** One of the most frustrating things about phone interviews is not being able to read the interviewers, but the feeling goes both ways! Although the interviewers cannot see you, smile and stay upbeat, and your personality and enthusiasm will show through.

• **Embrace the silence.** Phone interviews can be awkward because of periods of silences, particularly if you are on a conference call or if there is a delay due to distance. This downtime is normal, and is likely giving the interviewers a chance to take notes and prepare the next question. While your instinct may be to keep talking to fill the void, assure yourself it is all right, and keep your answers succinct.

**DON’T**

• **Ramble.** In many phone interviews, one might feel the need to overcompensate for the lack of non-verbal communication with excessive talking. The interviews can get bored, lose track of what you are saying, and become very disinterested. Also, you may be limiting the time that is available for you to answer other questions or for you to ask questions. Hosts usually have limited time for these interviews.

• **Say that you hate or are bad at phone interviews.** Interviewers want to see you in every setting and in every circumstance. Phone interviews can show immediate confidence or lack thereof. While you may be nervous on one end, make sure the interviewers sense the utmost confidence and poise on their end.

The interviews can be daunting, but remember, they liked what they saw on your resume. Therefore, on paper, you are already a good match for them. Practice those common interview questions, and feel free to have notes in front of you during the interview (the best part of phone interviews!). Also, keep track of your interview times (don’t forget about different time zones), interview somewhere you feel comfortable, and take some time to relax before the interview. In other words, don’t schedule an interview just after class or work ends. Some schools are slower in the process than others or just get way too many applicants to consider everyone. Don’t take it too personally, and do your best in the interviews you do receive.

5. **Making the Transition**

Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Ask your site what type of things to expect in your experience. Ask your site what items you should bring with you. And ask those questions that are important to you. Ask about the city, the program, the students, ask the questions that will help inform your experience and make it the best possible.

It can be really difficult to move to a brand new place for the summer, but there are a lot of ways to make this new campus your home. Consider getting involved in something on campus.
This tip may be especially useful to those who help with an orientation that takes place at the end of the summer. For example, I took a summer swing dance class offered on campus. You can also contact graduate student organizations which may have events that take place over the summer. Also, explore the campus and the town/city every chance you get! If you work with other interns then take the time to get to know them and plan activities to get to know the area together. Feel free to ask your coworkers or current students about the “must see” places. Your internship will be a rich and challenging experience. You will work hard but take some time to get to know the campus/city culture. It will make your experience that much better.

Enjoy not only the school but the city as well. How often do you get to live in a random city for 2-3 months without any strings attached?? Whether it be a small town in Georgia or a huge metropolitan, take some time to get out and see what it is like. Not only will you enjoy it, but it will show you what type of town you need or want in a job.

**When transitioning into your new position there are 3 important things to do:**

1. **Ask questions.** Make sure you do your homework, but have those questions ready for them when you arrive. They want to know that you have been thinking about this opportunity!

2. **Set expectations.** Tell them how you work, what you want from the experience, and plan out what is expected of you. That can take away any surprises throughout the summer and build a healthy relationship with your supervisor at the beginning.

3. **Have fun and explore!** It will be hard moving into a new place, and learning new processes/structures, but the best way to transition is to take this as a positive opportunity to meet others, and most importantly, branch out of your comfort zone.

Research the school and its surrounding area ahead of time. Find activities that you would able to do both in a group and by yourself. That way, as you’re making the transition and starting to meet new people, you won’t be bored in the process.

6. **Preparing for your Internship**

**Learn about the Host**

Take some time to explore the website and make sure to look at other sections in addition to the orientation page. It also helps to look at a visitor’s bureau website for the city the school is in; you will be living and enjoying the surrounding community too.

Look at the institution’s Web site, but be certain to look at the orientation program’s information. You will get a great idea of what incoming students are seeing before they arrive on campus, as well as learn some basics about what the orientation programs offers its students.

7. **Getting to Know Your Supervisor**

Stay connected with your supervisor throughout the semester. Ask if there are any projects you can work on or if there are certain things you can do to learn more about the program. If you are comfortable, take the opportunity to explore the city with your supervisor if they offer—it will be a great way to get to know them out of the office.
Talk to them! They hired you, they want you there, and they want to get to know you just as much as you want to get to know them. Don't wait until you get there to start making contacts. Take advantage of conferences like ACPA and NASPA to make contact.

Once you begin your internship you should try to see if there is a time that your supervisor is available to meet every week. You can pick to do lunch every Wednesday or coffee every Tuesday morning, but either way, these weekly meetings are a good way to spend some time connecting with your supervisor. Plus, try to remember that your supervisor will want to get to know you as well! So make an effort to talk to them when you both have free time!

8. Advice from Internship Hosts

Most importantly – return calls promptly! Even if you are no longer interested in that position, you owe it to the host to return the call and let them know. If you ARE interested, your call can confirm your interest before they move on to someone else who seems more eager.

"Please watch spelling and grammar when responding to emails and other correspondences. Even if you are sending a thank you note, it is all part of the interview process. Attention to detail is key."

If you are no longer interested in a position, please let the host know that. It will save both of you time, energy and is the professional thing to do.

Do not assume that a smaller stipend equals a smaller experience.

Be prepared with questions if you get an interview. We will know if you’ve not put any thought into your interview or looked at what our school and program is about. Remember that the phone interview can be difficult for BOTH of us ---- hosts are taking a leap of faith, too. It will help a great deal if you show your personality in the phone interview. Tell us what you’re looking for; tell us what you are most enthusiastic about. Help us get to know you.

Return phone calls and emails right away!

When you arrive --- help us help you get connected. Don’t be shy about telling us what you need, or don’t need.

You were selected, in part, for what you can offer. But also use this as a learning experience. Don’t try to change the program unless the host identifies that as a need.

Have fun with this – immerse yourself in the experience!