The Role of the Student Intern

Marion Webb
Head of Learning and Teaching Development
Structure of the session:

- Definitions
- The story
- What worked and why
- Student Engagement
The project bid identified the role of the intern as “central”

- To work collaboratively with peers.
- To identify and develop ways of collecting and analysing research data by means of questionnaires, interview and focus groups.
- Event planning.
Definitions

“a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting.”

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (2011)
(An internship)...

- contributes to the student’s personal and professional development through challenging work assignments;
- is usually completed before the student graduates from university;
- is planned and scheduled through consultation with the university so as to fit into the undergraduate experience;
- involves a supervision component that is mentoring and educational;
- includes career related experiences that complement what is learned in the classroom.
will have a reflection and evaluation process at the conclusion of the internship;
increases the student’s skills, confidence and independence;
is most successful when the student and the university share responsibility in making the internship a valuable experience.
The Kingston Story....
Activities:

2 interns 2008-10
- Data input
- Focus groups
- “Big events”
- Course rep events

5 interns 2010-11
- “Big events”
- Video conference with Appalachia State University, NC
- Conference preparation
A fresher's fair for finalists
Post-it exercise: words to describe how you feel about the final year

- Now
- Next
Describe your final year in 1 word!

Describe your next step in 1 word!

NOW

NEXT
“I enjoyed having the responsibility to organise a successful event and definitely learned a lot along the way. The sheer time it takes to arrange something like this was definitely a learning experience”
But.....

“My mistakes in this occasion made me understand how critical the formation of a group really is and how important the initial stages are for the correct integration of the different team members”
“We should have split up the roles differently so that everyone knew what to do “
Interns identified development in their skills:

- Communication and networking;
- Time-management and prioritising;
- Working collaboratively and negotiating;
- Planning events
- Research skills.
Knowledge

- insight into the way in which the university departments and faculties were run (through attendance at Steering Group, Advisory Group, Staff conference, office space)
Student Engagement

- working with students to develop a shared vision on all matters that affect them including institutional policy and procedures, curriculum, quality and pedagogy;
- opportunities to talk to students as individuals to understand how to work with them more effectively;
- ensuring that the right conditions exist for students to engage within the institution;
- helping students develop their personal goals, aspirations, motivation and expectations and become more autonomous, self-directed lifelong learners.

May, H. (2011)
Engagement achieved by

- Establishing a sense of community in the educational setting (Hand L and Bryson C 2008)
- Levels of development and independence of thought seemed to derive from a special sense of community (Perry 1999)
Conclusion

“It’s made us think outside the box “
“I loved being given the opportunity to think and to use my brain and to come up with ideas”
Outduction interns

- given an opportunity to demonstrate initiative and creativity;
- confidence was developed by having the opportunity to liaise and communicate at different levels within organisations.
Questions

- How can we develop real work experience in the university context for our students?
- How can we support them in articulating their development?
References

Hand, L and Bryson, C (2008) Student Engagement SEDA Special 22

