Making the Most of your Summer Internships

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CRA-W.org
@CRAWWomen
What does CRA-W do?
Individual & Group Research Mentoring

Undergrads: Undergraduate Research Experiences
Undergrads: Distinguished Lecture series/role models
Grad Cohort: Group mentoring of graduate students
Grad Students: Discipline Specific Research workshops
Academics/PhD Researchers: Group mentoring for early and mid career @ CMW, Grace Hopper, and Tapia

2400+ students & PhDs a year

Stay in touch: CRA-W.org, @CRAWomen, Facebook: CRA-W, Linked-in: CRA-Women
CRA-W Events at Grace Hopper

Visit the CRA-W Booth in the EXPO to learn more (#2050)

Attend another CRA-W Session
Wednesday (3): Thursday (3) or Friday (1)

Visit a CRA-W Table at the Student Opportunity Lab on Friday (Undergrads)

Stay in touch: CRA-W.org, @CRAWomen, Facebook: CRA-W, Linked-in: CRA-Women
Who we are?

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Two areas of focus are intertwined: the soft skills and technical

• Soft skills can be focused technically
  • Managing Expectations
  • Professional Relationships
  • Organization culture
  • Make it count for you
  • Own your work
  • Be open to constructive criticism
Working with Technical People

- Synonym for “people skills”
  - Non-technical
  - Can apply soft skills to technical aspects of the job
- Personal attributes that indicate a high level of Emotional Intelligence
- Why do they matter
  - How you deal with technical people, especially your colleagues
  - How you are regarded
  - How you work with others
  - Enable you to function and thrive in teams
  - Creates a healthy work environment
Technical Expectations are people skills

• Communication – tone, style, tailored to audience, act accordingly
• Self-motivation – initiative, reliability, commitment
• Leadership – positive attitude, outlook, effective communication, motivating others, setting an example
• Responsibility – self awareness, humility, willingness to learn and progress
• Teamwork – working toward a common goal, listener, perceptive
More soft technical skills ... cont

• Problem solving – analytical, critical
• Decisiveness – put things in perspective, weigh options, assess what is relevant, anticipate consequences
• Time management – deadlines, meetings, schedules
• Flexibility – willingness, openmindness
• Negotiation and Conflict Resolution – persuasive, influence, establish rapport
Manage your Expectations

Have reasonable expectations

• What are you doing for the summer
  — Mundane?
    • Research for someone
    • Graphs for data
    • Lots of reading
  — Glamorous?
    • Arranging meetings
    • Software development – single module
  — Learning the field
    • Exposure
    • Experience
    • Resume

• Make the most of it !!
Manage your technical Expectations

Have reasonable technical expectations

- What are you doing for the summer
  - If you are a CS major, you should be coding?
    - Find out their coding standards and follow them
    - Ask questions
    - Offer opinions
  - Have someone review your code?
    - Learn from mistakes
    - Learn from different standards
  - Learn before asking
    - Research before asking
    - Ask to clarify
    - Be self-sufficient
- Make the most of it !!
Professional relationship

Prove yourself through managing your professional relationships

• Dependable
  — Arrive on time and ready
  — Don’t goof off
  — Do what you say, manage deadlines

• Attention to detail; be prepared
  — Follow instructions
  — Care about quality of your work
    • Do an excellent job even if it’s not the greatest work
    • Build your “work” portfolio

• Listen for great ideas: find your next projects
  — Go to talks and ask questions (think of questions in advance)
  — Go to group meetings and pay attention, participate and contribute

• Be open to trying something new and interesting
Technical relationship

Prove yourself through managing your technical relationships

• **Impactful**
  — Ask for challenging assignments
  — Complete quickly and ask for feedback
  — Perform and manage deadlines

• **Attention to detail; be prepared**
  — Documentation – people hate to do this
  — Care about quality of your work
    • Consistently do a good job
    • Save your “work” portfolio – make it available online for future show and tell

• **Listen for great ideas from colleagues**
  — Be attentive at technical or update meetings and ask questions
    — You may not understand everything – research them

• **Be open learning new tools and new programming languages**
Organizational Culture

Pay attention to office politics and culture

• Observe how others work in the office and mirror that
  — How do people talk, dress, address each other, do in their down time
  — Perform and act like the staff around you
• Listen but do not gossip
• Get to know the people you need to know
  — Find a way for them to remember you
  — Get to know as many people as possible: unofficial leaders
• Stand out in comparison to other interns
  — Get introduced early on
• Dress appropriately
  — Dress for the job not your campus
Organizational Technical Culture

Pay attention to how people work

• Observe how others work in the office and mirror that
  — Do they use github, slack/IM, e-mail, gdoc/collaboration
  — Use the same tools like the staff around you
• Get to know the people you need to know
  — 15 min tech coffee break/lunch to learn more
  — Get to know as tech areas possible
• Stand out in comparison to other interns
  — Accomplish technically what others cannot
• Hackathons?
  — Do the same technical activities, ie meet ups
Make it count for you: Resist the “do-nothing” Internship
Pay attention and focus on your work

• Resist digital socializing
  — Social media, web surfing
  — Texting, IM-ing friends
  — It does impact your work: perception
• Weekly status reports to your supervisor
  — Keep them in the loop
  — Generate new ideas
  — Find out what they are working on
  — Mitigate any issues ie travel plans, alternate technical contact
  — Positive way to end the week
• Staff opinion counts – have a positive memorable impact
  — Be resourceful – research on your own before asking for help
  — Take on challenging projects with optimism and eagerness to learn
Make it count for you: Resist the “non-technical” Internship

Pay attention and focus on your work especially when the task is a challenge

• If your supervisor isn’t available, find out who is #2
  — Always know whom you can ask technical questions
  — Always have an objective and a deadline
  — Research the topic

• Show what you have achieved
  — Poster session?
  — Co-write a submission to a conference
  — Apply for a scholarship to attend a technical conference
  — End your internship in a positive way

• Staff opinion counts – have a positive memorable impact
  — Ask about other areas ie systems administration, operations, networking
  — Ask about the type of classes you should be taking, ie computer architecture, software development
Own your work

Take responsibility for errors

• The impact is greater in the workplace compared to school
  — Affects more than you
  — Handle it correctly
    • Don’t blame
    • Don’t cover it up
    • Don’t make excuses
    • Own it and FIX it
  — Tell your supervisor it won’t happen again
    • Mean it !!
• Help others in normalizing a mistake – especially another intern
  — Bring the “cohort” together
    • Leadership role
    • Teamwork, team building
• Say “thank you” and express appreciation
Be open to Constructive Criticism

Be proactive in seeking and accepting feedback: good or bad

• Ask your supervisor
  • How am I doing?
  • What can I do better?
  • Am I meeting your expectations? Goals of the project?
    — Make it easy for them to provide you input
      • Professional development
      • Make suggestions ie Toastmaster
    — Incorporate into your daily work
• Learn from your co-workers/staff (people want to talk about themselves and will be flattered, and want to help you)
  • Ask about their careers
  • What do they like about it
  • What is a good day, what is a bad day
  • What advice do they have, tell them you value their opinion (potential mentor or sponsor)
Stretch yourself technically

What to ask for if your internship doesn’t have it

• Training: internal “classes”
• Presentation: Brown bag, poster session, final report
  — Gives you a chance to show off what you did for the summer
  — Others who haven’t seen you, will see you
  — Ask your supervisor early and schedule it, market it

• Beyond summer
  — Conference presentation
    • Travel support
  — Paper submission, co-author
  — Continue the work: can you be paid to work remotely
  — Potential of returning
  — References
THANKS

Please rate and review the session in the GHC 17 mobile app.

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