Summer Internships

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Practical Value of Internship

• Experience
• Improve resume (+ papers, explore patents)
• Try out potential career alternatives
  – Industry
  – National Laboratory
  – Academia (teaching internship)
• Live in a different area, work and community culture
• Experience different work environments, tools, practices
  – research, product, etc.
• Sharpen your research area at school
• Widen professional circles (another letter of support writer)
Decision for an Internship

• Will it take away or enhance your dissertation research?
• Is it the right time?
  – Do you need the time to complete the writing of your dissertation?
  – Are there publication/other deadlines you might miss?
• Is it the right kind of internship?
  – Will it build up your skill set?
  – Will it lead to publications, employment, or new collaborations?
Getting Started: Finding An Internship

- Common Intern Hiring Windows
  - November
  - February
- Professors and advisors contacts
- Apply to / through large national programs (ACM/ACM-W, IEEE, SHPE, NSBE, SWE, NACME, GHC, Tapia, etc.)
- Campus Career Centers, LinkedIn, Conference Exhibitions
- Network!
  - Conferences
  - Career fairs
  - Professional meet-ups
Preparing your application materials &

yourself

- Keep your web page updated – highlight experience
  - Link in a copy of your CV (get critiques)
- Create/update your LinkedIn page
- Do mock interviews
- Identify at least three references
- Develop and practice an ‘elevator pitch’
- If on a visa, know what paperwork is expected
Interview: Putting Your Best Foot Forward

• Before the interview
  – Ask about the format of the interview
  – For behavioral interviews use STAR Method (describe Situation, Task, Action, and Result)
  – Research the company/group/personnel

• The Interview
  – Show motivation and enthusiasm
  – Ask clarifying questions
  – Ask about/share particular projects
  – Talk through as you answer technical/complicated questions
  – Be ready to ask a few questions of each interviewer
  – Ask about their decision timeline

• After the Interview
  – Send thank you notes to the folks that you meet
  – Follow up in ~1 month
Interview: Common Questions

- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Tell me about your research?
- What is the largest project you worked on? What was your role?
- Give an example of how you handled a difficult situation
- Puzzle/Brain teaser
- Coding Challenge
Now That You Got the Job, What’s Next?

• **Before the Start Date**
  – Ask what/how to prepare
  – Agree start/end + any necessary time off
  – Understand what expenses will be reimbursed / process for repayment

• **On the Job**
  – Do a good job!
  – Understand expectations and deliverables
  – Keep your supervisor informed of your progress
  – Interact with the people around you (learn the culture)
  – Attend talks and seminars
  – Work independently but don’t be afraid to ask for help
  – Have fun!
Post Internship: What’s Next?

• Keep in touch with host, recruiters, etc.
• Ask about the hiring process for full time
• Ask about the potential for returning next year
• Write a paper about the work – understand what information can and cannot be shared
Exercises to try back at school
Exercise #1: The Elevator Pitch

Elevator Pitch Requirements:
- Duration should be no more than 60 seconds
- Sections should include:
  - Problem area background / motivation
  - Problem statement
  - Technique created / used
  - Results
  - Conclusions

Exercise Activity:
- Form groups of your peers / advisors
- Practice giving elevator pitch
- Group members help critique with a focus on 3 areas
  - Clarity
  - Timeliness
  - Story Completion
Exercise #2: Mock Interviews

- Pair up with one person
- Play the interviewer and the other the interviewee
- Then switch roles

- Format
  - 5 minute questions
  - 3 minute feedback
Questions?
Questions?