Summer Internships

Russ Joseph, Northwestern University
Alan Bivens, IBM Research

2018 CRA URMD Grad Cohort Workshop
Practical Value of Internship

• Experience
• Improve resume (+ papers)
• Try out potential career alternatives
  – Industry
  – National Laboratory
  – Academia
• Live in a different area
• See different work environments
  – research, product, etc.
• Remember why you are in school
Getting Started: Finding An Internship

- Common Intern Hiring Windows
  - November
  - February
- Professors and advisors contacts
- Apply to large national programs
- Career Center
- Network!
  - Conferences
  - Career fairs
  - Professional meet-ups
Preparing your application materials and yourself

- Get your web page up-to-date –highlight experience
  - Link in a copy of your CV (get critiques)
- Create a 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
Exercise

Elevator Pitches

• Break into groups of 4-5 and have each person give their 60 second elevator pitch
• Spend time discussing techniques that were particularly effective
Example: Hiring Process at ???

- Detail hiring process at top company
Interview: Putting Your Best Foot Forward

• Before the interview
  – Ask about the format of the interview
  – Research the company/group/personnel

• The Interview
  – Show motivation and enthusiasm
  – Ask clarifying questions
  – Ask about 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?
- Give an example of how you handled a difficult situation
- Puzzle/Brain teaser
- Coding Challenge
Interview Exercise

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
Now That You Got the Job, What’s Next?

• **Before the Start Date**
  – Ask what to prepare
  – Agree start/end + any necessary time off

• **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: After Job, 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