

NISGTC  
Collin College  
Virtual Internship/Externship Pilots  
Documentation

Methodology:

1. Requirements
   1. Course with a project in the discipline
   2. Faculty member who is interested in delivering a virtual internship/externship
   3. Business leader interested in being a mentor for a team of students to solve a real world problem
   4. Access to an online webinar software system
   5. Dedication and flexibility from all involved
2. Faculty member
   1. Needs to be one who is flexible and willing to let a business person lead the project
   2. Needs to be willing to learn from the business person
   3. Needs ideally to be willing to set up the webinars, record them, and act as a facilitator with the student teams and the business person
   4. Needs to be willing to help locate and establish a relationship with the lead business person
   5. Needs to be willing to help locate and arrange for 4-5 additional business people to review and evaluate the final student presentation
3. Virtual Business Lead
   1. Needs to be flexible
   2. Needs to be willing to dedicate 4-5 hour sessions to a virtual webinar throughout the semester or quarter, working with students AND needs to be willing to answer emails from the students in between webinars
   3. Needs to provide the project and/or vet the project at least
   4. Needs to help review and evaluate the final student presentation
   5. Needs to help locate other business people to help with the final evaluation session
4. Students
   1. Need to be willing to take what they have learned to date and work as a team to solve the “real-world” business problem.
   2. Need to create a presentation explaining the solution
   3. Ideally need to create the actual solution in a lab environment (may or may not be feasible)
   4. Need to present the solution as a team to the business reviewers either virtually or face to face, depending on availability of the business reviewers
5. The Business evaluators
   1. Need to understand what courses the student team members have taken so that they have context regarding what the team members should know for background
   2. Need to actively listen to the team presentations
   3. Need to ask probing questions, not trying to stump them but rather trying to help them
   4. Need to review the lab solution if created, asking questions about this solution as well
   5. Need to fill out the rubric form to evaluate the students

Collin’s Experience:

1. Collin piloted 3 employer-led virtual internship/externship capstone projects in Spring 2013 across 3 disciplines, but the Networking project was most successful and is therefore documented as a role model
2. Virtual internship/externship benefits
   1. Job market remains competitive and unpredictable for graduates
   2. On-site Internship not always a feasible option as community college students who often work full time to put themselves through school and provide for their families
   3. Provides students the opportunity to work directly with a business mentor in a quasi-internship capacity
   4. Helps provide competitive edge for students because students can add write-up to their portfolios
   5. Mimics working virtually with teams, which students will likely experience once they enter the industry
   6. Student earns potential business leader reference and job search assistance/support
3. Networking Virtual Internship/Externship Pilot Implementation
   1. Entire virtual internship course for spring 2013 was dedicated to the project
   2. Vice president of IT Infrastructure at a multi-state bank served as business industry partner & mentor
   3. Faculty leadership provided by a lead Collin professor of IT
   4. Students tasked with designing IT systems and security for five urgent care clinics and tying them together to increase efficiency
   5. Students had to design a multi-site network, work within a budget, work as a team, and present their findings to a panel of business leaders
   6. The students and the business leader interfaced using a webinar tool five times throughout the semester for a little more than 1 hour (discussed the project and developments the students had made towards the project)
   7. Between interfaces the students also communicated with the business leader via email
   8. The pilot culminated with the final presentation to a panel of business leaders, faculty, and IT experts
   9. IT experts scored the students using a rubric developed by the IT professor
4. Featured article in Frisco STYLE

[*http://www.friscostyle.com/2013/10/02/a-leg-up-on-the-competition*](http://www.friscostyle.com/2013/10/02/a-leg-up-on-the-competition)

1. Recommendations
   1. Smaller classes, perhaps 10 -12 students
   2. Business leaders and faculty that embrace the value of students solving real work problems
   3. Business leaders and faculty who value the importance of virtual projects
   4. Provide student projects which are not clearly defined (encouraging students to understand the importance of asking questions )
2. Lessons learned
   1. Prepare business leaders involved with the final student project presentations regarding the level of effort provided and prior courses taken by the students prior to the presentation