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## INTERNSHIPS AND POST-GRADUATION EMPLOYMENT

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INTERNSHIPS AND POST-GRADUATION EMPLOYMENT

by

Camilla Mears

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The College of Education and Human Services

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at Murray State University

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## Abstract

Internships help prepare college students to be work-ready upon graduation while affecting primary stakeholders in the internship experience to include not only the college student but also the higher education institution (HEI) and employer. The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between college internship participation and post-graduation employment. If a relationship existed, then does that conclude that internships should be mandatory at HEIs? This study utilized a historical dataset of the May 2018 graduating class from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. SPSS software was used to analyze two categorical variables of college internship participation and post-graduation employment. Analyses included frequency of occurrence, Chi-Square test for independence, and logistical regression. The results of the statistical analyses indicated that the frequency of students not participating in a college internship was 55% while students that participated were 44%. Chi-Square test did not support a relationship between college internship participation, and the logistical regression did not support internship participation as a good predictor of post-graduation employment nor were the two categorical variables related. Limitations of the study were the usage of one historical dataset from a single HEI and the lack of information on the diversity of student makeup. Implications from the study were the unknown impact of the low unemployment rate in the area during May 2018 and students that were already employed and unable to participate in an internship. The study did not conclude that internships should be mandatory.

*Keywords:* internship, stakeholder, post-graduation employment, Kolb Experiential Learning Theory

## Dedications

The Bible states, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” (Philippians 4:13 King James Version). I would like to thank God for the ability to complete this dissertation process along with the increase in wisdom and knowledge. To my son, Donavan, thank you for being proud of me just because I am your mother. I will always love and advocate for you. I look forward to you living your best life. To my sisters, Shea, Brooke, and their spouses, I thank and love each of you for being such role models for me. To my aunts, uncles, other family members, and church family, thank you for your prayers and words of encouragement throughout this journey. To my father, Mr. Ray Palmer, thank you for teaching me the importance of Christianity, education, and perseverance. Thank you for continually asking me how my dissertation is going. I love you Daddy for always being in my corner and always being available to me. To my mother, Mrs. Barbara Palmer, who passed before I finished this dissertation journey, I thank you for your love for me, the confidence you instilled in me, and most of all, being the best mother.

## Table of Contents

Title Page .....	i
Abstract .....	ii
Dedications .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Tables .....	vii
List of Figures .....	viii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Significance of the Problem.....	6
Calls for the Study .....	8
Purpose of the Study .....	11
Conclusion .....	12
Key Terms.....	13
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	15
Introduction.....	15
Definition of Internships .....	15
Successful Internship Programs .....	16
Definition of Experiential Learning.....	20
Benefits of College Internships for Students .....	21
Benefits of College Internships for Employers.....	24
Benefits of College Internships for HEIs.....	25
Costs versus Benefits of College Internships.....	26

Other Arguments in the Internship Field .....	27
Disadvantages of Internships .....	29
Limited Research Areas of Internships.....	31
Employment of College Graduates .....	32
Skills gap.....	32
Conceptual Framework .....	33
Conclusion .....	41
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY .....	43
Introduction.....	43
Research Question .....	44
Rationale for Research Approach .....	44
Data Analysis .....	48
Conclusion .....	49
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS.....	51
Introduction.....	51
Research Question .....	51
Findings and Analysis.....	52
Frequency Descriptive Statistics.....	52
Chi-Square Test Inferential Statistic.....	55
Logistic Regression Inferential Statistic .....	57
Conclusion .....	59
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION.....	61
Introduction.....	61

Summary and Conclusions .....	61
Recommendations for Future Research .....	64
Limitations of Study .....	65
Implications.....	66
P-20 Implications .....	71
Conclusion .....	73
References .....	75
Appendix A: IRB Exemption Determination Letter .....	82
Appendix B: First Destination Survey Report .....	83

## List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Responses to Survey Questions by College.....	49
2. Graduating Students That Completed Internship.....	54
3. Frequency of Post-Graduation Employment .....	55
4. Status Recode Details of Post-Graduation Employment Status .....	56
5. Logistic Regression Model Summary of Probability of Occurrence.....	59
6. Classification Table of Correct Observation of Status of Graduation Prediction.....	60
7. Significance of Variables in the Model Equation for Completed Internship.....	60



## List of Figures

Figure 1. A diagram of the Kolb Learning Cycle as the conceptual framework of the study .....	35
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## **CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION**

The primary stakeholders involved in the internship experience are the students, employers, and the higher education institutions (HEIs). These stakeholders have multiple benefits. For students, internships provide the opportunity to become young professionals, allow networking opportunities, and afford students professional contacts. For employers, internships provide a free assessment of potential employees rather than only depending upon the resume of the student. Also, internships drive down costs to employers by reducing recruitment and training costs (Silva et al., 2016). For HEIs, internships solidify the bond between the employers and institutions. HEIs also enjoy the benefits of employers providing modern technological advances in the profession that can be shared in the classroom of the HEI.

College internships benefit the three stakeholders mentioned above with special emphasis on the link between student internships and the prospect of post-graduation employment. There are costs associated with student internships that are examined. This research addresses the benefits of student participation in an internship experience. The overarching research question is the following: What is the relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment? The aim of this study is to determine to what extent student participation in an internship predicts post-graduation employment.

An internship bridges the gap between course material gained at the HEIs with a real-world application at a jobsite. Internships are also called externships, cooperative education, or practicum (Weible & McClure, 2011). An internship length of duration may be as short as a week or as long as a full semester with the student participating at a jobsite with a goal of the student applying coursework to the jobsite. The cooperative education experience provides the student with more work experience with less of a focus on application of the college education

material (Weible & McClure, 2011).

Internships focus on educational experiences with a work base related to specific jobs, positions, occupations, or professions (Adebakin, 2015). The hands-on experience helps to develop employment skills that are not provided in the classroom. Internships connect the coursework with the employer jobsite (Adebakin, 2015). The key item that Taylor (1988) brings out in defining internships is career-relevant work experience prior to graduation from an academic program. Employers that utilize internships include small businesses, large corporations, government at local, state, and federal levels, and nonprofit organizations. Internships can be paid experiences, unpaid experiences, part-time, or full time experiences (Stanton, 1992).

One of the missions of HEIs is to serve as the foundation for students to obtain employment within career fields. HEIs prepare students through providing theoretical knowledge to students (Vélez & Giner, 2015). One area that requires attention for students entering the world of work is that of employment skills in leadership, communication, customer service, and technical ability (Cappelli, 2015). Employers have indicated that new employees are not career-ready upon employment. Employers have determined that soft skills are lacking upon employment. Internships fill in the gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in the college classroom to the professional employment environment (Cappelli, 2015). Internships, provided by employers, provide students with the necessary practical skills and experience to prepare students for the post-graduation work environment.

HEIs are a part of the pipeline for the educational pathway of preschool to work for students (Silva et al., 2016). A challenge that HEIs face includes improving employability skills of students, and college internships provide the improvement students need (Silva et al., 2016).

Concerns of HEIs include the following: student enrollment, budget cuts, funding, organizational effectiveness, productivity, employability skills of students, and competitiveness among HEIs (Silva et al., 2016). One way to combat the concerns of HEI administrators regarding employability skills is through internships (Silva et al., 2016).

Employers have expressed vacancies in the employee pool due to the employment skills of recent college graduates. Only 49% of industries and academic leaders feel that HEIs are meeting the student needs (Sauder et al., 2019). Employers blame the education system for not providing student with these employment skills that employers require which leaves recent graduates incompetent which is defined as a skill gap (Cappelli, 2015). Employers are unable to fill computer science, engineering, and information technology positions due to lack of college graduates which is called a skill shortage by employer-associated organizations along with the federal government (Cappelli, 2015).

Employers argue that there is an abundance or shortage of certain jobs which is called a skill mismatch. Engineering and information technology fields experience a skill mismatch through a shortage (Cappelli, 2015). Employers want new employees that are aware of cultural diversity and are current with information technology and communication skills (Coco, 2000).

One aspiration students have for attending an HEI is to obtain employment after graduation. A stepping stone for college students is the participation in an internship, which will provide the competitive edge for a student to obtain post-graduation employment in the field of study (Vélez & Giner, 2015). Internships are the competitive edge for HEIs to contribute to the employability graduate labor supply (Silva et al., 2016).

Internships are a type of experiential education that provide work experiences for student exposure to career choices. Internships performed while in college are a way for

students to experience real world learning and provide a service to the community. Internships allow students to confirm or eliminate career choices. A few ways to determine the benefits of internships on the post-graduation of college students include: decrease the amount of time it takes to get a significant job, number of jobs that are related to the major of the student, and student wages post-graduation (Klein & Weiss, 2011).

The author will examine the need for colleges and universities to provide an internship experience to further develop the career pathway of the student. Benefits to potential employers include practical application, enhancement of employability, ease into professional world, a bridge from college to the workforce, and view of potential employees. Benefits to students are building professional contacts, workforce skills, and acclimation to a work environment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A point of discussion is the number of graduates employed in the actual fields of the degree of study (Silva et al., 2016). The results of student graduates working in the actual field of the degree can be improved through the participation of students in an internship while in college. According to a study at the Center for Career Development and Talent Acquisition conducted by National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), internships are a predictor of career outcomes for students (Saltikoff, 2017). The internship participation benefited students in gaining post-graduate employment within six months of graduation (Saltikoff, 2017). Employers look at academic majors when considering employees or recent college graduates, but other skills include: leadership, teamwork, written and oral communication skills, and problem-solving (Saltikoff, 2017). The NACE Job Outlook Survey of 2016 stated that employers are looking for college graduates that are leaders and team players (NACE, 2016).

Not all college graduates participate in college internships which may contribute to a lack of preparation for the real-world work environment. The problem of non-participation in an internship experience for recent graduates affects employers in the decision to hire recent graduates (NACE, 2016). Since most employers are proponents of college internship participation, then HEIs should make internships mandatory for college graduates. The internship experience is a means to prepare students for post-graduation employment and increase employer likelihood of hiring the graduate (NACE, 2016).

If college students do not participate in college internships, then the student may experience a gap between what the student learning in the HEI and the application of knowledge (NACE, 2016). The employer looks to the HEI to prepare the student for real-world work skills upon employment to include soft skills of problem-solving and critical thinking (NACE, 2016). The HEI has the responsibility of preparing the student for the skills necessary for a successful and fulfilling professional career upon graduation. The skills gap that employers are experiencing in the newly hired college graduates are leadership, teamwork, and communication skills (NACE, 2016; Crosley, 2018).

The lack of mandatory college internships at HEIs may contribute to graduates being unemployed and employers having open positions (NACE, 2016). Recent graduates also will not be able to utilize knowledge upon gainful employment which may negatively impact the labor market (NACE, 2016). Another way to express the knowledge gained in HEIs is the hard skills, or the academic field of study (Stack & Fede, 2017). The employer experiences the gap in soft skill development while the graduates become less desirable as an employee. Employees and HEIs agree that internship participation is a means to obtain soft skills for the college graduate. The HEIs can fix the problem of a student being work-ready by implementing

internship participation as a requirement for college graduation.

Stack and Fede (2017) refer to evidence from a study that assesses student soft skill development before and after internship participation. The results of the study showed that individual soft skills of student interns improved significantly when compared to the beginning of the internship experience. HEIs provide mandatory internship experience for some fields of study but not all fields of study.

Employers view internships as an enhancement for career preparation (Sagen, Dallam, & Lavery, 2000). The internship experience provides a seamless pathway for students to gain employment after graduation. According to Sagen et al. (2000), due to the seamless transition from college to career, the colleges and universities should offer this experiential education to students to solidify full time employment after graduation. The internship experience should be a mandatory part of curriculum for graduation (Sagen et al., 2000).

### **Significance of the Problem**

The value of internships is seen through employers placing much value on internships when selecting future employees, even more than the college attended, grade point average of the student, or the major (Berrett, 2013). Job recruiters also prefer college graduates that have participated in an internship (Stanton, 1992). Employers view an internship experience as experiential education and learning by doing (Stanton, 1992).

In response to the request of employers to provide employability skills upon hiring of the student graduate, the HEI utilizes internships as the student transition from college to work (Silva et al., 2016). Employers encourage HEIs to offer internships as a way to prepare students for the workplace environment (Westerberg & Wickersham, 2011). One of the goals of the HEIs is to provide employers with college graduates that have the desired job skills. Another

goal of HEIs is to increase the skill level of the US workforce (Cappelli, 2015). Employers experience the following shortfalls to include the lack of STEM skills along with soft skills gap of work ethics and motivation (Cappelli, 2015).

Employers view internships as an enhancement for career preparation (Sagen et al., 2000). Internships are valued by employers yet, not all colleges and universities provide internships. Learning outcomes from internships include self-awareness, job context, experience in the field of study, learning how to increase knowledge, and integration of theory and practice (Clark, 2003). Colleges should consider student participation in an internship experience mandatory due to the benefit of aiding in the transition of a student from college to career (Sagen et al., 2000). Employers also include skills such as the ability to learn, problem-solve, and be a team player as important work skills (Chillas, Marks, & Galloway, 2015).

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), established in 1999, had a primary focus for US colleges and universities to be measured for effective educational practices that relate and result in educational outcomes. The NSSE indicates internships and employment are important to provide the student with a broad general education. Also, necessary in positive educational outcomes are effective and clear written communication skills, enhancement of the relationship with faculty and administration, and attraction of new students at HEIs. Lastly, NSSE determined positive educational outcomes include the ability of students to synthesize critical thinking skills, to apply critical thinking skills, and to work well with others (Coker, Heiser, Taylor, & Book, 2017; Rao, 2015).

Other organizations that indicate the importance of internships are the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Intern Bridge (Coker et al., 2017). Another organization that studies college internships is the National Association of Collegiate



Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) (Coco, 2000).

### **Calls for the Study**

The University of Rhode Island Center for Career and Experiential Education survey in 2013 evaluated pre- and post- soft skill development for student interns. The results of the soft skill development over the course of the internship indicated that there was improvement in skills following the internship (Stack & Fede, 2017). Soft skills are stressed by employers because soft skills allow employees to effectively operate in the work environment. Examples of soft skills are oral and written communication skills (Tulgan, 2016). Employers have indicated that soft skills are a part of an employee being work-ready. Without the soft skills, employers have indicated that new employees are not career-ready upon employment.

Employers are looking at HEIs to prepare students with soft skills. HEIs can prepare students through internship participation to address soft skill development. According to Koc (2018), HEIs and employers are engaged in challenging issues. Also, employers report a shortage of workers to fill technical positions. HEIs argue there is no shortage of workers to fill these skilled positions, but these positions were previously filled by personnel without college degrees. Now, employers are requiring college degrees for skilled positions (Koc, 2018). Since January 2013, 71% of jobs were filled with college graduates (Koc, 2018). Employers have also blamed HEIs for a skills gap, or college graduates not prepared for the workforce. Legislators have also assigned blame to the HEIs for not preparing skilled and prepared college graduates (Koc, 2018).

Only 33% of employers side with HEIs adequately preparing recent college graduates for the workforce and graduates that are work-ready (Koc, 2018). The Bureau of Labor and Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) report indicated as many as six

million unfilled jobs exist as of November 2017 (Koc, 2018). The report may suggest a skills gap, but the unfilled jobs are due to 3.2 million workers quitting jobs. 1.7 million workers experiencing layoffs, termination by the employer, and 0.3 million workers experiencing attrition, disability, or transfer within the corporation (Rao, 2015). After the breakdown, the remaining, unfilled jobs are 700,000 (Koc, 2018). The statistics entertain the notion that HEIs are not totally to blame for the unfilled positions that employers incur.

Another explanation for unfilled jobs is that job openings follow the economy. During the 2008 recession in the United States, there was a decrease in job openings because employees did not trust the economy, and employees did not change jobs (Koc, 2018). As the economy improved, then job openings increased because employees felt more stable and safe to change jobs (Koc, 2018). The skills gap is not supported by the national wage data. The supply and demand for workers has not fluctuated along with wage increase which indicates there is no demand for workers (Koc, 2018). If there is a demand for workers, then the wage will increase.

Employers may claim a skills gap because technical skills have not been filled by an employee. Other explanations for the skills gap may be that the employer may not present the wages to attract employees with the desired skill set. The employer may not keep up with changing technology. The skills that require training and development to remain current with the industry may not be kept up by the employer (Koc, 2018).

The skills gap can be explained with the economy, labor market trends, and employer lack of current technology, but HEIs can diminish the outcries from employers and legislators through generating a mandatory graduation requirement for all students to participate in a college internship. The mandatory internship requirement by HEIs can eliminate the debate with employers. Internships can provide more collaboration with the HEIs and employers to

benefit the student success. A gap exists between theoretical knowledge and real-world experience for the student and HEIs are not bridging the gap. Internships fill in the gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in the college classroom to the professional employment environment (Cappelli, 2015). Internships, provided by employers, give students the necessary practical skills and experience to prepare students for the post-graduation work environment.

The researcher is interested in determining if there is a link between student internship participation and post-graduation employment. NACE indicates that student internship participation is a predictor of career outcomes for students (Saltikoff, 2017). NACE also indicates that internship participation affects employers in the decision to hire recent graduates (2016). NACE states that students experience a gap between what the student is learning at the HEI and the application of knowledge. An internship experience is a means to fill the gap (2016). Employers view internships as an enhancement for career preparation (Sagen et al., 2000).

The question is whether student internships predict post-graduation employment. Research has shown that students that perform experiential education to include internship experiences are more likely to gain full time employment post-graduation. Due to the internship making a positive contribution to the student career pathway, then the colleges and universities should make an internship a mandatory part of the college curriculum as a graduation requirement. If graduates do not gain employment based upon the student internship experience, then research is needed to determine the root causes. Another intriguing area concerning student internships is the higher salary from employers when compared to the salary of students that did not participate in an internship.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the extent to which student participation in a college internship predicts post-graduation employment. The study will determine if a link exists between college internship participation and post-graduation employment within six months of graduation. If statistical analysis can provide evidence that there is a correlation between internship participation and post-graduation employment, then the HEIs should incorporate mandatory internship participation prior to graduation to further prepare college students that are work-ready. HEIs can provide an answer to employers and legislators that believe that there are skills gaps for recent college graduates which results in lack of full preparation for the workforce.

HEIs provide internship experiences for some fields of study, but not all curricula. HEIs can make the internship experience a mandatory component to meet graduation requirements. Statistics for the AAC&U indicate that 73% of graduating students perceive they obtained job and work-related knowledge, skills, and abilities from internship participation. 42.3% of senior college internship participants received a job offer (Stack & Fede, 2017).

Employers reported that 44.6% of new employees were hired from internship programs. 73% of employers want HEIs to emphasize application of knowledge, skills, and abilities in real-world settings to college students which can be accomplished through internship participation (Stack & Fede, 2017). Employers have indicated that student participation in internships is an example of a high impact practice to ensure recent college graduates are prepared for post-graduation employment and that recent college graduates have the foundation for becoming a successful new employee (Stack & Fede, 2017).

**Research Question.** This study was guided by the following overarching research

question - What is the relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

Research question 1: Is there a relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment.

Research question 2: Is there a predictive relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment.

### **Conclusion**

Internships benefit HEIs, students, and employers that prepares the student to be career-ready upon employment after graduation. Internships provide HEIs a more robust curriculum from employer cutting-edge technology and practices. The employers are able to try out students through an internship experience prior to offering full-time employment after graduation. Through the collaboration of all the stakeholders involved in the internship process, internships are indirectly linked to a robust and technologically advanced labor force and positively contributes to the labor market. Even with employer benefits from the internship experience, a gap exists between the employer desires of employees with strong leadership skills, excellent written and oral communication skills, and the ability to work in teams and the HEI curriculum presented to students. The internship experience benefit to college students should incite the HEIs to make internships a mandatory part of the college curriculum to ensure students are prepared for the work environment.

## Key Terms

**Internship:** a specified time of a student at an employer site to gain professional knowledge of a field of study. The internship provides the student the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge to a work experience. The student performs tasks that develop professional work skills and allows the student a hands-on approach at the work place. Students also can develop a mentor through seasoned professionals which may lead to recruitment of the student by an employer for future employment. The internships can be paid or unpaid (Nghia & Duyen, 2019).

**Stakeholder:** as a person of interest or affected by a variable. For example, stakeholders that are affected by internships include students, HEIs, and employers. These stakeholders are considered primary stakeholders because of the direct relationship with the internship variable (Irwin, Nordmann, & Simms, 2019).

**Post-graduation employment:** refers to a student that graduates from college with an undergraduate degree that utilizes knowledge, skills, and activities in a position at a place of employment in the field of study at the HEI (Wang & Lee, 2019).

**Kolb Experiential Learning Theory:** a theory that promotes learning by experience. This theory was created by Kolb in 1984 that focuses on active learning through the learner completing a four-mode cycle. The learner can enter at any point but must complete the entire cycle. The first mode is a concrete experience. The learner experiences an activity or task. The second mode is reflective observation in which the learner determines the steps of the experience by reflecting on the experience. The third mode is abstract conceptualization, or abstract analysis, in which the learner makes conclusions on what was observed. The last mode of the cycle is active experimentation, or using the knowledge gained from the experience to try

other experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2018; Wallace, 2019).

## **CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Internships are a part of experiential education that allow students to experience real world career environments that solidify the career choice of the student and provide future potential employees for employers. Internships are not a required part of college curriculum, yet student participation in college internships have provided post college graduation employment for students. This research seeks to address the potential for colleges and universities to institute mandatory internship experiences as a graduation requirement due to the logical career pathway to full time employment that an internship provides.

### **Definition of Internships**

The purpose of internships for students at the collegiate level is to provide real work experience along with feedback to the curriculum of the institution. (Adebakin, 2015). The internship enhances the knowledge, skills, attitude, and personality of students to prepare the student for future employment (Wang & Lee, 2019). Internship benefits for the student include personal development, maturity, and independence (Adebakin, 2015). Internships provide opportunities for students to think and do in the workplace (Clark, 2003). Internships are important because of the benefits that include preparing students for graduate school, awareness of diversity, and teamwork. Internships provide the student self-enhancement, development of knowledge and skills to include research, problem-solving, communication, and empathy. Students also benefit from internships with the development of critical thinking skills, analytical skills, and independent thought (Coker & Porter, 2015).

Internships are an indicator to employers that interns are mature and competent through meaningful work and provide an advantage over students who do not participate in an internship



(Coco, 2000). Internships provide a bridge for students from the classroom to the workplace or from the college to the real world. Internships provide the student with a way to apply the classroom knowledge to the workplace to solve real world issues and problems. Employers have a way to evaluate and recruit future employees (Coco, 2000; Nghia & Duyen, 2019).

Internships allow students to work with seasoned professionals (Coco, 2000). Also, employers seek experienced professionals, but recent graduates may not have the experience to compete for jobs seeking experienced professionals (Nghia & Duyen, 2019). The internship experience provides the student with real-world experience so employers can evaluate future employees. Employers tend to select students with leadership potential and an attitude that is positive and successful. A positive attitude signals the employers that the student is motivated, energetic, and has leadership potential (Coco, 2000).

Internships demonstrate to employers that the graduate is work-ready (Chillas, Marks, & Galloway, 2015). Internships are a way to handle the complaint from employers that students are not competent in business and technical skills (Wang & Lee, 2019). Academic departments at higher education institutions (HEIs) build a reputation with organizations when employers host interns. Internship durations may include six to eight months, summer only internships, or part-time internships during the semester (Clark, 2003).

### **Successful Internship Programs**

Successful internship experiences include the following: assessment of success for the student, institution, and employer, workplace supervision, evaluation of intern and the internship program, and an involvement by the internship coordinator or director (Alpert, Heaney, & Kuhn, 2009). In addition to the value placed on internships by employers and recruiters, there are benefits to students that participate in college internships, which include:

academic credit, higher salaries, exposure to workplace culture, habits of the workplace, professional work place habits, resume building, and an increase in student self-awareness (Westerberg & Wickersham, 2011). Students that participate in internships often have an advantage in the job market due to exposure to the workplace (Taylor, 1988). Students who successfully complete college internships have the following personality traits: eagerness to learn, a positive attitude, and enthusiasm (Stanton, 1992).

Maintaining a successful internship program includes a recruitment program that must be instituted in the academic department of the students applying to the internships (Alpert et al., 2009). Students' academic success is measured through a competitive grade point average. The internship program must properly define the student attributes and match them with the employer workplace (Wang & Lee, 2019). The department conducts an orientation with the employer and student to review expectations and define successful results of the program (Alpert et al., 2009). With student participation in internships, students can solidify professional goals, increase professional contacts, improve upon classroom performance, obtain monetary gains with a paid internship, and determine student strengths and weaknesses (Stanton, 1992). A quality internship program provides the student with challenging and creative work. The employer has a mentor for the intern to provide advice. Sources of good internships come from: college alumni, family connections, classmates, or professors (Coco, 2000).

Objectives of the internship program for students to learn include: The student understands the work environment so that professional skills are built. The student obtains objective evidence of work skills obtained so that student employment after graduation is enhanced. The student gains knowledge from the internship experience. The student learns

from classroom experience along with professional experience through the integration of theory and practice (Clark, 2003).

The internship program objectives are obtained by providing academic assignments to the student to improve the professional skills and deepen the intellectual maturity (Clark, 2003). Examples include work product, internship and coursework connection, presentations, internship context, lessons learned and resume, daily journal, and personal and interpersonal competencies. The work product may include a report or portfolio of the student work, which is formal. This report or portfolio includes the student accomplishments and learning along with the effect the work had on the organization. The report or portfolio is objective evidence of the student work experience gained, which helps with post-graduation employability (Clark, 2003).

Feedback from employers should be a part of the internship process so interns engage with employers and understand how to improve work skills (Chillas et al., 2015). High-impact practices to include internships provide the students with deeper learning of career fields, general education, practical competence, and personal and social development (Coker, Heiser, Taylor, & Book, 2017). Most internship programs at HEIs are led by faculty, internship director, or a placement officer. Faculty that lead internship programs may get course load credit, compensation, or course load reduction (Coco, 2000).

A successful internship program includes a dedicated person to advise the internship program: a faculty internship advisor (Clark, 2003). The mentors at the organization write a letter acknowledging the job duties for students are related to the major. The faculty advisor verifies the quality of the job duties and the number of hours the student participates. The advisor provides mentorship to the student as necessary and ensure the academic assignments align with the internship experience (Clark, 2003).

One of the most effective ways the internship program can provide intellectual growth in the student is for the student to reflect on the internship experience (Clark, 2003; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019). Another effective way for the student to meet objectives is through practice at the employer to develop job skills such as organizing information and problem-solving, increase knowledge and develop student abilities, and utilize the skills obtained from the internship experience to obtain employment after graduation (Nghia & Duyen, 2019; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019).

Student participation in various experiential learning experiences along with the time the student participates promote the learning gains (Coker et al., 2017; McCarthy, 2016). Student success through internships can be measured through the HEIs providing numerous experiences for students to choose that meets the interests and developmental needs of the student by matching up the experiential learning opportunities at the HEIs. For HEIs without previous experiential learning programs, one best practice is to implement a program that focuses on a few activities that reach a lot of students (Coker & Porter, 2015).

HEIs need to focus on building the program to ensure student success through matching factors driving student decisions with HEIs learning outcomes. HEIs utilize curricular requirements or career goals to determine what factors are affecting student experiential learning decisions. Next, the HEIs sets broad learning outcomes. The HEIs develops experiential learning opportunities like internships, service learning, research, study abroad, or leadership. Contacting students with the learning outcomes may come from admissions messaging websites, or advising (Coker & Porter, 2015).

Providing access to experiential learning for all students through advising, building core curricula, scholarships, and include minority needs. HEIs require the student to provide

reflections on the experiences along with mentor preparation (Coker & Porter, 2015). HEIs can make experiential learning accessible to all students by not limiting the emphasis in certain programs and majors, but also using general education programs, university-wide scholarship programs, and other institution-wide structures to embed in the core curriculum. Another way to create access to all students is through helping minority students to overcome unique barriers such as isolation of minority students or non-interesting destinations. To address the financial costs to students of participating in experiential learning, the HEIs need low cost but high-quality opportunities for students and experiential learning scholarships. Overcoming the transportation costs that may limit student participation in internships can include travel to and from internship sites (Coker & Porter, 2015).

One last strategy to overcome access for all students with financial obstacles to experiential learning is through targeted advising to minority students so students are aware of scholarship opportunities or transportation to and from work sites. In establishing learning outcomes at the HEIs, collaboration among an experiential education advisory committee is beneficial to establish a common core of outcomes. The committee should include experiential department, provost office, student life, and HEIs core curriculum (Coker & Porter, 2015).

### **Definition of Experiential Learning**

College internships are a form of experiential learning (Adebakin, 2015). An internship is a way to introduce the student to a seamless transition from a HEI to the workforce. Internships also provide a means of relating course material with work-related content. Internships provide a deeper understanding of the workplace environment. Internships sponsor better explanations of jobs, positions, occupations, or professions. Internships encourage persistence to graduation and academic performance of students (Adebakin, 2015). Internships

provide the students with information on ways to gain professional employment through experience-based learning. Students pull from the internship experience to problem solve at the workplace. Other forms of experiential learning in HEIs include study abroad, undergraduate research, internships, community service, and leadership experiences (Coker et al., 2017; Nghia & Duyen, 2019).

Extensive time participating in experiential learning provides students with hard skills to include technical skills of the workplace. Participation in various experiential learning experiences provides the student with soft skills to include team work, communication, and flexibility. Both hard and soft skills are valued by employers. Benefits of experiential learning include: gains in deep learning, practical competence, persistence rates, civic engagement, appreciation of diversity, and professional networks (Coker & Porter, 2015).

Internships provide the students with information on ways to gain professional employment through experience-based learning. Students improve problem-solving skills at the workplace through internship participation (Adebakin, 2015). Not all subject areas or fields of study provide internships, but there are areas that are more popular for college internships: marketing, business, education, engineering, industrial relations, interior design, journalism, sciences, arts, communications, recreation, public interest, English, economics, bioscience, surveying, information systems, accounting, management, and psychology (Alpert et al., 2009; Bay, 2006; Binder, Baguley, Crook, & Miller, 2015; Coco, 2000; Stanton, 1992; Taylor, 1998; Wasonga & Murphy, 2006; Weible & McClure, 2011).

### **Benefits of College Internships for Students**

Benefits of college student internships exist for students, employers, and HEIs. Students improve discussion in class, student enrollment in colleges, the college department reputation is

improved, student job satisfaction, development of communication skills, and better workforce skills. Student benefits include better understanding of the classroom concepts compared to workplace application; improved knowledge of industry and career paths; solidify personal interests and career goals; less workplace shock after graduation; quicker advancement in the company than non-interns (Coco, 2000). The classroom discussions are improved through students relating the real-world work experience to course material (Weible & McClure, 2011).

Other benefits of internships for students include problem-solving skills, teamwork ability, references for future employment, and lessen the effect of shock into the professional context (Silva et al., 2016). Lessons taught by internships are an asset in tough economic times (Berrett, 2013). Student participation in college internship experiences obtain a competitive edge over students that choose not to participate in internships. Workplace etiquette along with skills are learned when a student participates in an internship. Overall, the internship experience for students provides career preparation (Bay, 2006).

Student benefits of experiential learning include: acquiring a broad general education, acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills, writing clearly and effectively, speaking clearly and effectively (Coker et al., 2017). Other student benefits include thinking critically and analytically, analyzing quantitative problems, using computing and information technology, working effectively with others, and voting in local, state, or national elections (Coker et al., 2017). Additional benefits include students effectively learning independently, the student understanding self, understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds, solving complex real-world problems, developing a personal code of ethics, and contributing to the welfare of the community. Internships also provide students with higher financial compensation compared with students that do not participate in college internships (Coker et al.,

2017).

College internship participants are often rewarded with post-graduation employment (Moore & Gomez, 2013). Another student benefit from internships includes the student gaining valuable insight into the organization. Students gain employment skills and knowledge about employment. Employment skills include teamwork and peer communication. Students are provided feedback regarding personal development in the workforce. Students may benefit from monetary compensation for the internship experience (Moore & Gomez, 2013). More benefits for students include self-awareness and confirmation of the field of study at an HEI, understanding of real-world issues and work environment, enhance intellectual abilities, more classroom participation, and zeal for HEI curriculum (Clark, 2003).

Students participate in the internship experience to gain real-world experience in a professional environment. Students have solidified career goals, improved soft skills such as teamwork and oral communication skills, and gained post-graduation employment. Even with benefits for students that participate in internship programs, students do not participate due to the following: majors and career goals, peer interactions, preconceptions about the different opportunities, learning goals, financial need, minority status, ancestry, and involvement in other campus activities (Coker & Porter, 2015). With majors and career goals, the students are not offered college internships within the field of study which prevents the student from participation. Peer interactions and preconceptions can generate a negative concept of a college internship which prevents students from participating. Students cannot fit the internship into the college curriculum which may delay the graduation date if the student participates. Students do not participate due to lack of learning goals clearly defined by the HEI internship program. Students also work while in college in which the financial need outweighs the benefits of the



internship experience. Student athletes that travel extensively are often prevented from internship participation due to scheduling conflicts.

Students often receive academic credit for the internship experience. Students build future employment contacts and may receive financial compensation (Clark, 2003). Benefits of college student internships exist for students and employers. Students improve discussion in class, increase student enrollment in colleges, improve the college department reputation, are satisfied with the job, develop better communication skills, and develop better workforce skills (Weible & McClure, 2011). Employer benefits that also serve as student benefits include a better hiring pool from which to choose, better employment opportunities, and a better relationship with the HEIs (Weible & McClure, 2011).

### **Benefits of College Internships for Employers**

Employer benefits include the better hiring pool from which to choose, better employment opportunities and better relationship with the HEI (Weible & McClure, 2011). Employers utilize internships as recruitment of new employees. Forty percent of internships result in full-time employment post-graduation (Weible & McClure, 2011). Companies use internships to train, develop, and recruit future employees (Adebakin, 2015). Employers want new employees to have workforce skills prior to employment. Internships provide a way to accomplish workforce skill development prior to employment (Adebakin, 2015).

Organizations view internships as a qualification of employment. Internships make the student more marketable in the eyes of the employer (Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010). Hiring managers at organizations utilize internship experiences for college graduates as a screening tool for initial employment. Employers view internships as an enhancement for career preparation (Sagen, Dallam, & Laverty, 2000).

Employer benefits include less expensive labor with competent employees, student employees that are motivated and productive, interns can complete tasks that fulltime employees can focus on other assignments, and employers can evaluate and cultivate future employees (Coco, 2000). Employers can mold interns to fit the workplace culture. Employers stress the importance of soft skills during the recruitment and selection process. Soft skill aptitude is also monitored throughout the internship experience, and interns are evaluated on how the organization was benefitted due to the intern. Students that demonstrate soft skill abilities such as team work or communication skills are more likely to obtain an internship, receive more training, more detailed work experience, and become employed after graduation (Chillas et al., 2015).

### **Benefits of College Internships for HEIs**

HEIs benefit from college internships through the collaboration with the community to provide learning through engagement of employers, facilitating the collaboration with employers and the community along with the assisting students in the completion of student education to obtain future employment (Berrett, 2013; Westerberg & Wickersham, 2011). Internships provide the employers a deeper collaboration between them and the HEIs (Silva et al., 2016). Other benefits of internships for HEIs include gaining funding for research from employers, aligning the employer skill needs with the college curriculum, and responding to unemployment problems (Silva et al., 2016).

HEIs can be viewed as a recruitment agency because HEIs collaborate between students and employers. HEIs nurture long-term relationships with employers for employers to serve as placement sites (Chillas et al., 2015). HEIs increase the supply of graduates and provides graduates that are employable and are able to transition from higher education to work (Chillas et

al., 2015). Employers agree that internships bridge students with entry-level employment within organizations and students become more employable. Employers also agree that internships bridge students within organizations. Academic departments at HEIs build a reputation with organizations when employers host interns (Clark, 2003; Nghia & Duyen, 2019).

HEI benefits exist from providing a variety of experiential learning opportunities, framing the experiences for liberal-learning outcomes, to providing all students with access to each type of experience (Coker & Porter, 2015). This leads to students that have a deeper learning and career development. Internships ensure that HEI curriculum is aligned with the field of study. The internship coordinator places student graduates based upon field of study and skills of the students. Worksites of the employer may provide guest speakers in the field of study, financial contributions, or field trips for students (Coco, 2000).

### **Costs versus Benefits of College Internships**

Few researchers have addressed the costs related with the student participating in an internship or the employer cost with hosting an intern. Other related costs with the HEIs have provided very little research. Cost-benefit analysis of curricula that include internships include the resources needed to develop an internship. One cost of internships is the investment of faculty time to develop a course involving an internship. Another cost is the investment of time to find meaningful sites with curriculum for the employment supervisors to follow. A third cost is the professional liability insurance for students going off campus (Moore & Gomez, 2013). A fourth cost is an increase in HEI costs to support experiential learning as students spend extensive time participating in experiential learning (Coker et al., 2017). Even though there are costs associated with internship in relation to all stakeholders, the focus of research indicates that the benefits outweigh the costs. One way to reduce HEI costs is to have students pay half

of tuition fees while participating in an internship (Chillas et al., 2015).

Previous scholarship has failed to consider students from nontraditional educational backgrounds, such as parents without high school diplomas or college graduates that are not aware of the benefits of a high school diploma or college degree. College students from nontraditional educational backgrounds do not show a greater benefit in mandatory internships that result in employment post-graduation. The researcher may address how to make college internships more attractive and inclusive to nontraditional students. Traditionally internships have focused on voluntary internships, but mandatory internships failed to address the impact on the labor market. Mandatory internships are not an asset to the labor market. Mandatory internships lessen the value for the college student and devalues the experience because the experience is more related to the curriculum rather than interest from the student (Klein & Weiss, 2011). Arguments suggest that mandatory internships may hinder the financial obligations of the students who work to attend HEIs. Also, the student may resent the mandatory internship experience which contradicts the benefits of a college internship experience in providing post-graduation employment (Klein & Weiss, 2011).

### **Other Arguments in the Internship Field**

One argument in the internship field involves the Co-Constructed Developmental Teaching Theory (CDTT) that indicates time is critical in the learning process yet the HEIs are trending toward shorter experiential learning opportunities due to economic pressures on HEIs. Extensive time in experiential learning increases costs for HEIs to support (Coker et al., 2017). Shorter experiential learning times are used by admissions at HEIs as selling tools to recruit new students (Coker et al., 2017).

Arguments are made that college internships should be mandatory. Arguments have

been made that not offering college internships may create an academic disadvantage to students (Binder et al., 2015). Other arguments are made that indicated internships are associated with lowering the unemployment level (Silva et al., 2016). The goal is to incorporate internships into the higher education institutional curriculum to provide the practical application not gained in the classroom (Vélez & Giner, 2015).

An argument is made that not all students choose to participate in experiential learning due to lack of financial resources, major requirements, athletics, lack of research on opportunities, commitments to student organizations, familial complications and obligations, preconceptions, and lack of transportation (Coker & Porter, 2015). The above listed reasons limit access of internships for all students.

Some HEI faculty argue whether internship programs should give students academic credit, and faculty deem internships as educational experience because students get paid and employers use students for inexpensive or free labor. Faculty and staff from HEIs have competing academic commitments to primary employment responsibilities which may hinder adequate attention to the internship program (Clark, 2003). The importance of this argument of academic credit is the win-win effect with students receiving academic credit along with compensation.

The best students, or academically advanced students, obtain the larger placement sites while the other students get the remaining sites which suggests that employers select motivated and socially advanced students rather than students that would benefit more from the largest organizations with the best placement sites (Wang & Lee, 2019). Some students with a more affluent background may be chosen over a student with a lower financial background. The affluent student that is selected for the best internship opportunity defeats the purpose of

developing social and motivational skills of students that do not possess those skills (Chillas et al., 2015).

Employers argue that HEIs do not prepare graduates for the world of work which is evident when students have poor work skills to include communication while HEIs argue that employers have a heightened expectation level of the student instead of developing the desired work skills. The employer reviews the performance of the intern harshly when the purpose of the internship experience is to gain work experience and develop work skills. Employers desire more input in the curriculum which does not agree with the HEI learning outcome of technically apt graduates. The importance of this argument is that stakeholders in the internship process are not collaborating but isolating from developing effective curriculum for interns (Chillas et al., 2015).

Another debate is whether mandatory internship experience creates positive labor market effects. The study from Chillas et al. (2015) indicates that there is no labor market advantage for lower educational backgrounds. This means that academic ability prevails over work experience. Also, a debate exists that HEIs are not providing the employer soft skills that are desired by the employer. The solution to this debate is student participation in internships to gain soft skills of communication, team work, and critical thinking (Chillas et al., 2015).

### **Disadvantages of Internships**

Students do experience disadvantages when participating in internships to include the following: work sites and work projects are not suitable, lack of preparation and planning by internship coordinators, lack of workplace chemistry between the intern and the supervisor, lack of faculty participation due to disinterest, no structure or evaluation of the internship experience (Alpert et al., 2009). Other disadvantages include lack of preparation and planning, inadequate

supervision, uniform requirements and application of theory, academic legitimacy, supervisors not provide suitable projects, poor match between intern and employer, intern is isolated, students not provided meaningful work, employers do not take internship seriously, faculty not view internship as part of educational program due to lack of rigor, no clear educational objectives, no structure to deliver objectives, no standardized methods of evaluation (Alpert et al., 2009).

Employers contribute to student nonparticipation in the college internship experience by not selecting students with very limited research skills (Coker & Porter, 2015) which places students at a disadvantage. Employers have an internship labor market to distinguish graduates that interned versus graduates that did not participate in an internship which provides a competitive edge for graduate interns. Internships may not pay student interns which may discourage students from participating. Employers may not provide a meaningful work experience for the student interns which may discourage students from participating (Chillas et al., 2015). Employers pay interns less than full-time staff, yet the interns perform the same tasks which may discourage students from participating in internships (Chillas et al., 2015). These disadvantages prohibit the student from gaining the positive aspects of a college internship experience such as priority in hiring from employers and the student being work-ready.

HEIs have a difficult time teaching soft skills such as communication skills, team work, and project management (Tulgan, 2016). HEIs do not make internships mandatory nor do they have enough placement sites to accommodate students. HEIs become complacent with the internship program and develop the attitude that any work experience will be valuable to the intern rather than focusing on the needed skills of the student and matching those needs with

employer desires for the internship experience (Association for Talent Development, 2015; Chillas et al., 2015; Tulgan, 2016).

Student and HEI faculty advisor contact is limited while participating in the internship which leaves the student feeling alienated (Chillas et al., 2015). Students have a sense of stress over not being able to perform at the internship as the employer expects so the expectations are not met by the student. Employers may promise a job to interns which may cause undue stress to perform (Chillas et al., 2015). Employers experience interns with poor habits such as lack of punctuality or poor communication skills and the employer may not interact with the intern to develop and improve work skills. Employers are also looking for more collaboration between the employer and the HEI to ensure all objectives of the internship program are met (Chillas et al., 2015).

### **Limited Research Areas of Internships**

Further research is required regarding the benefits of the length of time the student spends in high-impact practices and the different types of experiences students have while in college (Coker et al., 2017). This research can enhance program designs, general education requirement structure, advising practices, and overall student success (Coker et al., 2017). Lingering questions exist regarding components of internships such as lack of details of internships, goals for internships, structure of internships, and assessment of students that participate in internships (Alpert et al., 2009). Limited studies exist on the impact of internship experience on labor market opportunities and contribution to unemployment rate (Taylor, 1998).

The research of the effects of student demographics, differences in experiential programs at other HEIs, curriculum requirements, and different types of HEIs is another area



that requires further research. Due to variation in experiential learning across HEIs, guidelines should be implemented to develop effective internship programs (Coker et al., 2017). Studies are rare on the assessment of the impact of internships on graduate unemployment rate, structure, and format of internships (Silva et al., 2016). The length of time or duration of an internship may have an impact on academic outcomes for the student that prevent internship participation. One way to prevent lack of participation of the student due to duration of internship is to limit the time frame of the internship (Binder et al., 2015).

### **Employment of College Graduates**

**Skills gap.** Employers debate that the academic skills of college graduates are declining which has generated a skill gap idea (Cappelli, 2015). Also, employers have developed high impact and technologically advanced work systems that have caused college graduates to be unprepared to adequately compete in the labor force (Cappelli, 2015). Employers have identified soft skills that create a gap between college graduates and employment needs such as critical thinking, decision making, work ethic, motivation, oral communication, leadership, customer service, and personal accountability. Other skill gaps occur in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (Cappelli, 2015).

Employers cited that student interns are lacking in written communication skills, problem-solving skills, verbal communication skills, and a strong work ethic as important candidate attributes (NACE Center, 2016). In addition, while academic major has the most significant influence on a decision of an employer to hire one candidate over another, leadership roles, participation in extracurricular activities, and a high GPA are key factors (NACE Center, 2016).

Legislators have also assigned blame to the HEIs for not preparing skilled and prepared

college graduates (Koc, 2018). Only 33% of employers side with HEIs adequately preparing recent college graduates for the workforce and graduates that are work-ready (Koc, 2018). The Bureau of Labor and Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) report indicated as many as six million unfilled jobs exist as of November 2017 (Koc, 2018). The report may suggest a skills gap, but the unfilled jobs are due, in part, to 3.2 million workers quitting jobs, 1.7 million workers experiencing layoffs, termination by the employer, and 0.3 million workers experiencing attrition, disability, or transfer within the corporation (Koc, 2018). After the breakdown, the remaining, unfilled jobs are 700,000 (Koc, 2018). The statistics entertain the notion that HEIs are not totally to blame for the unfilled positions that employers incur.

Explanations why employers claim a skills gap include the following. Employers may claim that technical skills have not been filled by an employee. Employers may not present the wages to attract employees with the desired skill set. The employer may not keep up with changing technology. The skills that require training and development to remain current with the industry may not be kept up by the employer (Koc, 2018).

### **Conceptual Framework**

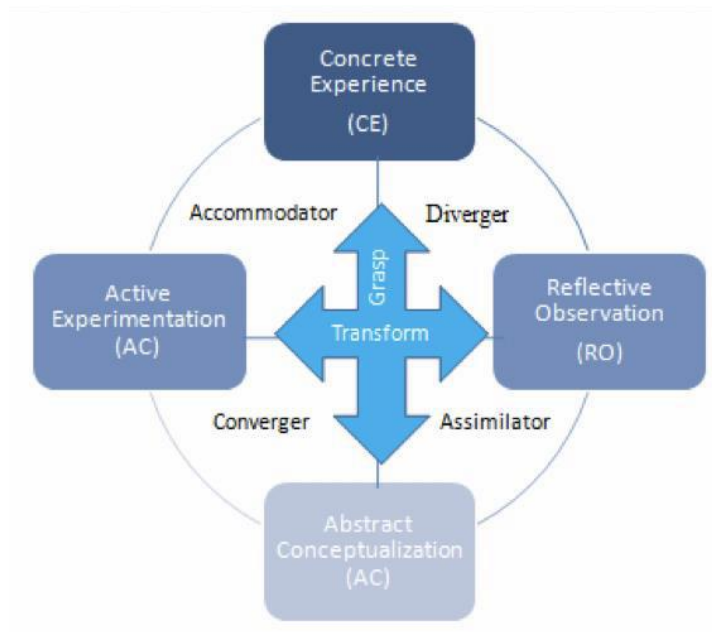
Experiential learning is a form of learning that is derived from life experience and complements classroom learning of theories and concepts (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Kolb & Kolb, 2018). Experiential learning is a hands-on experience by performing activities (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Kolb & Kolb, 2018). HEIs fill the gap between classroom learning and experiential learning with the internship experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). A conceptual framework that supports the internship experience is the Kolb Experiential Learning Theory (KELT), introduced by David Kolb, which includes the learning cycle, learning style, and the learning

space (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2018).

The theory of Kolb addresses the three stakeholders in the internship process: student, HEI, and employer. The student is the learner, and the teacher is the employer. The HEI provides the field of study (Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Irwin et al., 2019). The employer serves as the educator in the internship experience by providing knowledge to the student to receive and to create information from different perspectives which allow for learning and new insights (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). The learner is the student and the subject matter is on the job training along with knowledge, skills, and abilities. The HEI provides theories and concepts for the learner.

Out of the human learning and development theory by John Dewey, the HEIs have offered internships to expand upon the academic studies with on the job experience (Kolb, 1984). The KELT responded to the theory of John Dewey as a guiding influence for educational innovation in response to human learning (Kolb, 1984). KELT, explains the process of learning through the learning cycle. Kolb defines learning as encountering abstract concepts that are applied in various life experiences. New experiences provide the basis of developing new concepts (Kolb, 1984).

The cycle consists of four components: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation as shown in Figure 1 (McCarthy, 2016). The learner experiences all four modes of the cycle. The figure demonstrates the process of learning in order for the learner applies the cycle to the internship experience (Kolb, 1984). Figure 1 also depicts learning styles influenced by the environment, experience, and intellect of the learner (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). The learner can enter the process at any stage, but the learning process is completed upon movement through each stage.



*Figure 1.* A diagram of the Kolb Learning Cycle as the conceptual framework of the study (McCarthy, 2016).

Learning occurs as the learner migrates through the cycle. The concrete experience, observation, and reflection of the experience leads to the formation of abstract concepts through analysis and conclusions which test the hypothesis in the future which leads to a new experience (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). The first stage of the Kolb learning cycle is the concrete experience which is the activity followed by the reflective observation stage in which the learner tries to understand the activity (Kolb, 1984). The third stage is the abstract conceptualization in which the learner develops a concept from the activity or experience. The final stage is the active experimentation stage where the learner determines how to use the activity or experience in future tasks (Kolb, 1984).

The first component of the cycle, the concrete experience, allows the student a new look at an existing experience or a new experience (Kolb, 1984). Next, the learner evaluates the variation between the experience and the understanding by reflective observation of the new experience. Third, abstract conceptualization provides a new idea or change to an existing

concept. Lastly, the learner applies the concept to real-life experiences for the outcome called active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Each part of the cycle interacts and leads to the next step. The cycle can be entered at any mode, but the cycle is followed through all four steps.

Kolb addresses that people learn differently which is termed a different learning style which is influenced by the environment, experience, and intellect of the person (Kolb, 1984). From Figure 1, the learning cycle provides two choices on either end of the north - south axis, or y-axis – either think or feel. Both options are in conflict. The Perception Continuum is used when to define how the person thinks or feels about the event (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Either the person will think or feel, but will not perform both actions. The east and west axis, or x-axis, is called the Process Continuum, and is used approaching an event with either doing or watching. The person will watch or do, but not perform both actions (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

The two learning styles are grouped: diverging with assimilating and converging with accommodating. Diverging is defined as feeling and watching. Assimilating is defined as thinking and watching. Converging is thinking and doing while Accommodating is feeling and doing (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Concrete experience, or feeling, is either accommodating through active experimentation (doing), or diverging through reflective observation (watching) (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Abbreviations are CE for concrete experience, accommodating AE, or reflective observation RO. Abstract conceptualization, or thinking, paired with active experimentation is called converging or assimilating. Diverging is feeling and watching learning style that uses brainstorming, works well in groups, open-minded, and likes feedback (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

Assimilating learning style is watching and thinking who organizes information and explores theories. Converging learning style is a thinker and doer who is technically inclined, problem-solver, decision maker, and innovative ideas. Accommodating learning style is a doer,

feeler, learns by on the job training, and relies on existing information (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). These learning styles are beneficial to student interns to gain the most knowledge, skills, and abilities for success in the work environment after graduation along with the incorporation of academic success.

One central theme of KELT is that learning is process-focused and does not dwell on the outcome. Next, students have existing concepts of knowledge and beliefs and learning is sometimes relearning that is fine-tuned (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Conflict stimulates learning. The learning stems from differences and disagreements on what contributes to the learning process by environmental influences. Another theme is learning results from how a learner adapts and relates to the world through thinking, perceiving, and acting. Current experiences explain current concepts of the learner and new experiences refine old concepts through environmental influences. Lastly, KELT has a theme of knowledge being created and recreated (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

KELT can be combined with Quality Model Approach to address high-impact characteristics of stakeholders in the internship experience: students, HEI, and employer. The Quality Model and KELT stress the importance of assessment of outcomes for all stakeholders to drive continual improvement of the internship process. The students are assessed by the HEIs and employer to determine the quality of learning received from the employer at the internship site. The overall impact of the model and theory generates a highly successful internship site that nurtures the learning process and cycle presented by Kolb. The HEI gleans high impact practices to drive continual improvement in the internship process.

The Quality Model approach has aspects of stakeholder input that drives continual improvement in the learning environment, a company that promotes and rewards management

teams, and a strong faculty value system that promotes innovation, continuous quality improvement, and respect for the individual (Coco, 2000). Using this approach causes the HEIs to operate more effectively, student product improvement, and students that provide better competition in the global market (Coco, 2000).

The relationship between the Co-Constructed Developmental Teaching Theory (CDTT) and KELT is the alignment of learning by a cyclical process. The two theories utilize the modes of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. CDTT further explains that additional learning increases in complexity using the learning cycle. CDTT hones in on the importance of the internship experience to solidify concepts gained from the classroom in the real-world environment. HEIs can benefit from implementing mandatory internship experiences in all fields of study for a more qualified college experience for the student.

The Co-Constructed Developmental Teaching Theory (CDTT) states that experiential learning takes place in cycles that increase and become more complex with additional learning. This newer theory expounds on Kolb's experiential learning theory that states learning occurs in cycles between concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Coker et al., 2017).

The theory of experiential learning by Kolb explains how individuals learn through personal experiences (Crain, 2016). Stages of growth include acquisition, specialization, and integration. Personal experiences allow people to adapt and integrate experiences which explain growth, education, and work. The Kolb theory provides the context for the role of internships and employment for college graduates. The personal experiences gained from student participation in college internships help shape the career development and future employment.

The focus of the theory of Kolb is the process of learning gained through the internship experience which further prepares the student for insight into future professions and careers (Crain, 2016).

The internship experience provides a benefit to the college student participant. The real-world work experience gained through college internships provides the preparation for college students to flourish in post-graduation employment (Crain, 2016). With the Kolb theory, the more exposure to learning for college students that participate in college internships, then the more concrete the experiences become and contribute to the overall knowledge gained from the internship (Crain, 2016).

Another model, the Super Self-Concept Model, describes the importance of career development from personal experiences to develop personal identity development. This model is aligned with KELT because it provides a process for student development in stages similar to the process of learning presented by KELT. Both theories address development and acquisition of knowledge of the student. The Super Self-Concept Model explains the college experience to include the internship experience, but expands the self-concept into the professional development throughout the career of the student. This note is not addressed in KELT. The more exposure the students gain from internship participation, then the more complex the formation of the student identity. The student intern participation can lead to career choices and similar to the theory of Kolb can provide greater knowledge to contribute to post-graduation employment (Crain, 2016).

The Self-Concept Model of Super is similar to the Kolb model with a sequence of developmental stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. The college intern grows during the exploration stage of the internship experience, college



experience, and college curriculum. The exploration stage becomes important to the student intern because of the preparation for real-work after college graduation (Crain, 2016).

More explanation of the identity formation is the developmental self-concept stages of crystallization, specification, implementation, stabilization, and consolidation (Crain, 2016). The crystallization stage of self-concept development occurs when students explore skills, interests, and career options (Crain, 2016). The specification step occurs when the student becomes confident in the career option and participates in training activities such as internships and college curriculum. The implementation stage of the self-concept model provides the student with employment in the field of study after graduation (Crain, 2016). The stabilization stage occurs when the graduate contributes new and innovative ideas to the employer due to the intensive training gained by obtaining the college degree along with the internship. The last stage is consolidation where the student advances in the field of study with the employer through experience gained in the profession that further develops the self-concept (Crain, 2016).

One final model that aligns with collegiate internship participation benefits is the Self-Efficacy Model by Bandura which addresses the drive of a person based upon the belief, self-capabilities, and persistence to complete the goal even though challenges are present (Crain, 2016). The four contributions to self-efficacy are: 1) personal performance, 2) vicarious experiences, 3) verbal persuasion, and 4) physiological and emotional factors. The most influential factor for a college student intern is personal performance because personal performance is linked with student drive and perseverance the student exhibits. A student intern grows through achieving goals. The growth from achieving goals further develops and improves the self-efficacy. Participation in an internship experience motivates the student to pursue goals in self-satisfaction, self-efficacy, college degree, and post-graduation employment

in the field of study (Crain, 2016). This model addresses the progression through the internship participation, graduation from HEI, and post-graduation employment which improves professional success of the student. This model of self-efficacy applies to other areas of student life and contributes to a thriving member of society along with the labor force and global economy.

All the models, concepts, and theories presented demonstrate progress of the student as shown through the drive of the self-efficacy model. KELT, CDTT, and the Super Concept Model all are driven to achieve quality as expressed in the Quality Model which focuses on the importance of continual improvement. The HEI is challenged with providing the platform for students to become competitive in the labor force and global economy which is accomplished through making internships mandatory for graduation.

### **Conclusion**

The internship experience is a way to solidify or dismiss a field of study for the college student. An internship is defined as a real-work experience for the college student to gain work experience. A successful internship experience for HEIs, students, and employers can exist through alignment, assessment of outcomes, and continual improvement of programs. HEIs must have a dedicated person that serves as the internship coordinator to interview the supervisor of the internship at the work site and provide the match between employer needs and student skills.

A cost does exist for HEIs with dedicating faculty to supervise the internship program. Another cost to employers is the time dedicated to training the employee. A cost to the student is lack of pay for unpaid internships. These costs do not outweigh the benefits provided to the stakeholders: HEIs, employers, and students because the HEIs gain a relationship with

employers, and students gain meaningful work experience. The employer gains inexpensive labor and future employees.

Disadvantages do exist for internship programs when there is not proper planning from the dedicated staff at the HEI. The employer has not prepared learning outcomes. The student has not identified skills necessary to participate in an internship experience. The student may also require personal finances that preclude the student from participation in an unpaid internship experience.

Conceptual frameworks exist that support the benefits of college internship experiences to include the Quality Model that focuses on continual improvement in the learning environment, or internship work site, that promotes innovation for the student. Another framework is the Co-Constructed Developmental Teaching Theory (CDTT) that states that as learning increases and becomes more complex, then the learning cycle also increases and becomes more complex. This model expounds on the Kolb Experiential Learning Theory of learning occurring in cycles.

Other complements to the Kolb Experiential Learning Theory is the Super Self-Concept Model and the Self-Efficacy Model by Bandura. The Self-Concept Model is similar to the Kolb Theory because of the stages of the process of evaluation of the student exploration through internships which build upon the student self-concept. The Self-Efficacy Model which develops the student self-efficacy by perseverance to achieve a goal of internship participation and graduation from college.

## **CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This study was non-experimental and focused on any link between college internship participation and post-graduation employment. The research question and data analysis provided detail on the study. The categorical data consisted of student internship participation and post-graduation employment. Logistic regression was used to determine if there was a relationship between two categorical variables of internship participation and post-graduation employment. The descriptive statistic of frequency and inferential statistics from Chi-Square test and logistical regression analysis from SPSS software was used to determine if a relationship exists between college internship participation and post-graduation employment.

Descriptive statistics was provided from SPSS software with an analysis of data in the form of the frequency of occurrence of internship participation and post-graduation employment (Field, 2013). Inferential statistics provided analysis of the dataset to further explain a historical dataset (Field, 2013). Chi-Square test was used to analyze statistical significance of the two categorical variables. Logistic regression was provided from SPSS to compare two different events – a dependent (post-graduation employment) and independent variable (college internship participation) (Field, 2013). Logistic regression was used to determine how the independent variable contributes to the prediction of the likelihood of the dependent variable (Ranganathan, Pramesh, & Aggarwal, 2017).

Specific stakeholders that provide meaningful input in the success of internships include career services on campus, academic departments, community leaders, and state bureau of labor. The campus career services provide the link between the students and employers to match the skill set of the student with the employer for a positive internship experience for both

student and employer. The academic departments experience the benefit of the latest technology gained from the employer providing knowledge to the intern. The community leaders benefit from more informed students and more contacts in the fields of study. The state bureau of labor will benefit from a more technical and career-ready labor force.

### **Research Question**

This study was guided by the following overarching research question - What is the relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

Research question 1: Is there a relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment.

Research question 2: Is there a predictive relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment.

### **Rationale for Research Approach**

Statistical analysis allowed results of the investigation of a relationship between participation in an internship and post-graduation employment. The research question - What is the relationship between of college internship participation and post-graduation employment?

### **Data Source**

Statistical analysis from SPSS was used to determine the impact of the internship participation experience in college on the post-graduation employment. The analysis of the historical data from the Austin Peay State University Office of Career Services provided the

frequency of college students that have participated in college internship and have gained post-graduation employment. The analysis of the dataset utilized inferential tests Chi-Square for independence and logistic regression to determine if internship participation was a predictor of post-graduation employment of the student. The null hypothesis for the Chi-Square test was no link between internship participation and post-graduation employment. This null hypothesis provided results from the data analysis from May 2018 that may be a reason for HEIs to make the internships mandatory in the college curriculum. The independent categorical variable in the study was the college internship participation with a scale of no participation or yes participation. The next variable was post-graduation with a scale of no not employed or yes employed. The null hypothesis for logistic regression was to what extent is there a predictive relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment. The results of the survey for analysis were no internship participation or yes internship participation and no employment post-graduation or yes post-graduation employment.

The dataset in this study was a secondary dataset derived from the First Destination Survey Report of May 2018 for undergraduates at Austin Peay State University located in Clarksville, Tennessee (Appendix). This report was generated by the Associate Director of Career Services, Ms. Tonika Jordan (Jordan, 2018). A survey administrator scanned the survey responses for error prior to importing the data into Microsoft Excel for analysis then recorded in Microsoft Word for creation of the final report. The final report was uploaded to the Austin Peay State University Career Services website.

This dataset responded to the questions published by NACE. This report was also a requirement of the Department of Education of reporting the employment outcome of graduates within one year of graduation (Jordan, 2018). A survey was provided to the dataset population

that was derived from graduating seniors receiving a bachelor degree only to determine employment and career related outcomes. 873 undergraduate degrees were conferred but 61% of undergraduates responded to the survey which equals to 538 graduate responses (Jordan, 2018).

The survey consisted of eight questions and requested personal identifying information such as name, academic college, degree level, A number for APSU identification, APSU e-mail address and graduate phone number, and lastly, authorization of the graduate to permanently work in the United States – yes authorized to work in United States or no not authorized to work in United States. The personal identifying information was redacted from the dataset provided to the researcher. One of the survey questions was to select the status of the graduate after graduation with the category of employed full time (on average of 30 hours or more per week). A second survey question that was of interest to the researcher was the participation of the graduate in the completion of an internship, co-op, practicum, field study, or clinical prior to graduation with a response of yes participation or no internship participation. If the response was an internship, co-op, practicum, field study, or clinical experience, then the survey asked to the student to provide profile information concerning employment such as place of employment and length of experience.

Other questions from the survey included the best description of primary status of graduate after graduation with the following options: primary status full time or employed part-time; if employed, then profile information of place of employment; if volunteer, or involved in service program, then also provide profile information; if primary status is US military, then provide service branch and rank; if primary status is enrollment in program for continuing education, then provide profile information such as university or college attending.

The overall survey responses were categorized by college with results listed below (see Table 1). There were five colleges: Arts and Letters, Behavioral Health and Science, Business, Education, and STEM. The survey question responses were categorized as individual response rate, number of degrees awarded, graduates that responded to the survey, respondents that completed an internship, average salary of post-graduates, full time employment of graduates, and undergraduates attending graduate school. The college with the largest student population was the Behavioral Health and Science college. This college also had the most individual response rate at 62.8%, number of degrees awarded at 393, and graduates responding to survey at 247. This college also had the largest average salary of post-graduate employees and also tied for first for undergraduates attending graduate school at 14%. The Behavioral Health and Science college had the next to the lowest percentage of post-graduate students employed full time at 21% with completed internship at 47% (Jordan, 2018).

The Arts and Letters college had the most completed internship at 52.2% even though the college had the lowest individual response rate at 58.6% and lowest post-graduation employment at 21%. This college was the top college that attended graduate school at 14%. The Business college had a completed internship of 36% with full time employment post-graduation at 42%. The Education college had 41% completed internship with full time employment at 31%. The STEM college responses were 37.5% completed internship with 28% employed full time. The salary average for full time employed graduates was highest for Behavioral Health and Science college at \$43,854 with the lowest average salary in Arts and Letters College at \$28,800. Overall, Table 1 demonstrated colleges with student responses that did complete internships but did not equate to full time employment (Jordan, 2018) (see Table 1).



Table 1

*Responses to Survey Questions by College*

Name of College	Individual Response Rate to Survey	Number Degrees Awarded	Graduates Responded to Survey	Completed Internship	Salary Average	Full Time Employed	Attend Grad School
Arts and Letters	58%	150	88	52%	\$28,800	21%	14%
Behavioral Health Science	62%	393	247	47%	\$43,854	34%	14%
Business	62%	108	67	36%	\$39,905	42%	11%
Education	60%	53	32	41%	\$37,667	31%	6%
STEM	61%	169	104	37%	\$36,875	28%	10%

**Data Analysis**

The dataset was categorical, and inferential statistics was used for comparison. The descriptive statistics for categorical data yielded frequencies and percentages of internship participation and the number of students that gained post-graduation employment (Field, 2013; Mash & Ogunbanjo, 2014). Bivariate analysis will be used to determine if there is a relationship between the 2 categorical variables. The bivariate analysis is used for groups that will be compared and the inferences that will be made in any significant differences (Field, 2013; Mash & Ogunbanjo, 2014). A table will represent the two variables – internship participation and post-graduation employment within 6 months of graduation.

Inferential statistics was compared the present statistical differences and inferences were drawn regarding the comparison (Mash & Ogunbanjo, 2014). When comparing categorical data, the significant difference between the data was determined by a Chi-Squared test for independence. The Chi-Square test provided a p-value that was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference. In summary, the two variables from the dataset – college

internship participation and post-graduation employment – were used to provide Chi-Square results for independence.

Logistic regression was used to predict if college internship participation would predict post-graduation employment. Given a predictive factor, then SPSS provided the effect of participation in a college internship on post-graduation employment. The model analyzed the dependent variable of post-graduation employment (Ranganathan et al., 2017). The statistical software provided a model through calculating the odds of having the post-graduation employment outcome and not having the outcome. This intercept was also known as the constant (Ranganathan et al., 2017). Once the input variable – the participation in a college internship – was entered into the model, then SPSS provided a coefficient that determines if the variable contributes to the outcome of post-graduation employment (Ranganathan et al., 2017).

The dependent variable categorical value for post-graduation employment was coded as employed after graduation or no post-graduation employment. A hypothesis is a projection of the probability and was used to infer the confidence level of the actual value and the predicted value from the given input value (Ranganathan et al., 2017). The logistical regression model generated from the SPSS predicted the categorical dependent variable results of post-graduation employment on the categorical independent variable of completed internship. The logistical regression model had only two outcomes – post-graduation employment or not employed post-graduation (Ranganathan et al., 2017). In this study, the independent variable was college internship participation effect on post-graduation employment– the dependent variable.

### **Conclusion**

This study evaluated the impact of college student interns and post-graduation employment using secondary historical data from Austin Peay State University in order to build

a foundation for internships to become a mandatory part of college curriculum. The historical provided the number of students that participated in college internships that resulted in post-graduation employment. The link will be defined using inferential statistical analysis of Chi-Square test and logistic regression from the SPSS software program.

## **CHAPTER IV. RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

The results from the analysis of the historical dataset of Austin Peay State University undergraduates captured the college internship participation of students along with post-graduation employment which provided descriptive statistics in the form of frequency and inferential statistics in the form of chi-square test and logistic regression. The historical dataset contained categorical data which allowed the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software to determine if college internship participation could predict post-graduation employment. College internship participation served as the independent variable, and post-graduation employment was the dependent variable. The following were the results of the statistical analysis and a summary of the results.

### **Research Question**

The overarching research question – What is the relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment? There are two sub-research questions with a null hypothesis for each sub-research question.

Research question 1: Is there a relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment.

Research question 2: Is there a predictive relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment.

## **Findings and Analysis**

The analyses conducted with the SPSS software were frequency, Chi-Square test for independence, and logistic regression.

### **Frequency Descriptive Statistics**

Frequency statistic was a valid descriptive statistic to run for categorical data in this non-experimental study of historical data from the Austin Peay State University Office of Career Services. The historical data for analyses depicted the number of college students from the May 2018 graduation that have participated in a college internship and that have gained post-graduation employment. The first categorical data variable was completed intern, and the second categorical data analyzed was employed as from the dataset.

Categorical variables were defined with meaningful data from the frequency of occurrence of yes internship participation or no internship participation and yes post-graduation employment or no post-graduation employment. The dataset contained 538 students with 239 students that participated in a college internship which is a 44.4% frequency statistic. The frequency statistic for not participating in a college internship was 55.2% which equals 297 students. There were two students that did not respond which constituted 0.4% (see Table 2).

Table 2

<i>Graduating Students That Completed Internship</i>					
		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
Valid	Yes	239	44.4	44.6	44.6
	No	297	55.2	55.4	100.0
	Total	536	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	0.4		
Total		538	100.0		

The next categorical variable, employed as, provided responses that explain the status of full time or part time employment. This variable was defined as a college student that is gainfully employed after graduation with an undergraduate degree from Austin Peay State University. The descriptive statistic was the frequency of occurrence out of 538 students that were employed after graduation.

The frequency of students not employed was 2.8%, 2.8% or 15 students were participating in an internship after graduation, 2.8%, or 15 students had temporary work. The remaining students identified as yes employed: Entrepreneurs, 1.9% or ten students, freelance 0.4%, or two students, other work 20.6% or 111 students, and 29 students were employed, 5.4%. The highest frequency was valid employment at 63.4%, or 341 students (see Table 3).

Table 3

<i>Frequency of Post-Graduation Employment</i>				
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
Valid	341	63.4	63.4	63.4
Entrepreneur	10	1.9	1.9	65.2
Freelance	2	0.4	0.4	65.6
Internship	15	2.8	2.8	68.4
No	15	2.8	2.8	71.2
Other Work	111	20.6	20.6	91.8
Temporary Work	15	2.8	2.8	94.6
Yes	29	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	538	100.0		

The frequency statistic further categorized students that were employed, or status recode, as the following: employed full time (on average 30 hours or more per week) constituted 28.6% or 154 students. 2.8% or 15 students were not seeking employment. 2.8%, or 15 students, served in the military. 5.2%, or 28 students, were employed full time or part time. 8.2%, or 44 students, were employed part time. 11.9%, or 64 students, were not enrolled in a program of continuing education.

12.3%, or 66 students, were enrolled in a program of continuing education. 28.3%, or 152 students, were seeking employment (see Table 4). Table 4 differs from Table 3 because Table 3 asked for a description of employment: entrepreneur, temporary / contract work assignment, freelance, postgraduate internship, or other work category. Table 3 not only included employment after graduation but also included students that were not working.

Table 4

<i>Status Recode Details of Post-Graduation Employment Status</i>					
		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Valid Percent</u>	<u>Cumulative Percent</u>
Valid	Enrolled in a program of continuing education	66	12.3	12.3	12.3
	Employed full-time or part-time	28	5.2	5.2	17.5
	Employed full-time (on average 30 hours or more per week)	154	28.6	28.6	46.1
	Serving in the US Military	15	2.8	2.8	48.9
	not enrolled	64	11.9	11.9	60.8
	not seeking employment	15	2.8	2.8	63.6
	part-time employment	44	8.2	8.2	71.7
	seeking employment	152	28.3	28.3	100.0
	Total	538	100.0	100.0	

### Chi-Square Test Inferential Statistic

The Chi-Square Test was an inferential statistic. This test was also known as the Pearsons' Chi-Square test. The Chi-Square Test was an independence test used to determine if a relationship existed between two categorical variables. The two categorical variables from the study were completed internship and employed as from the survey. The Chi-Square Test operated from two assumptions: 1) The two variables are categorical, and 2) Two categorical variables have two independent and categorical groups. The two assumptions were met. Complete internship and employed as datasets each have two options: yes or no. Each



categorical variable only has two outcomes: yes or no.

The hypothesis - There is no statistically significant relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment. The value of the test statistic in this study was 56.693. The result of the Chi-Square Test was the Pearson Chi-Square. The p-value that corresponds with the test statistic was  $p = .000$ . The expected cell count assumption was three cells that are less than five which is equal to 18.8%. The expected minimum was 0.89. The statistics showed that there was no statistical significant relationship between internship and employment, therefore the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

The degrees of freedom provide the number of ways the cells varied in the two-way categorical table. For this statistic, the degrees of freedom, or  $(df) = 7$ . Since  $p = .000$ , then the test statistic was less than the statistically significance level ( $\alpha = .05$ ). The null hypothesis of no link between completed internship and employed was not rejected. In summary,  $\chi^2(7) = 56.693$ ,  $p = 0 .000$ . The conclusion was that there was an association between internship completion and employed as responses from the dataset, and there was statistical significance.

The Chi-Square Test was also used for the null hypothesis - There is not a predictive relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment. The value of the test statistic, Pearsons' Chi- Square was 12.362. The expected cell count assumption was that zero have expected count less than five with the minimum expected 6.69. No cells had expected count less than five so the assumption was met. There was a 3 X 2 cross tabulation table which provided the degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) for the test statistic which was seven. The corresponding p-value of the test statistic was  $p = 0.089$ . This value was greater than the statistical significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ ; therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

The conclusion was that the null hypothesis - There was not a predictive relationship

between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment – could not be rejected.

In summary,  $\chi^2(7) = 12.362, p = 0.089$ . The conclusion was that an association between internship completion and employed as responses from the dataset could not be rejected, and there was statistical significance.

### **Logistic Regression Inferential Statistic**

The statistical analysis of logistic regression was explained as the prediction that there was a probability that an observation was in the category of the dependent variable based upon an independent variable. For the study of the dataset, the dependent variable was post-graduation employment and the independent variable was completed internship. The logistic regression was another inferential statistic that fits the dependent variable on the set of independent variables. Sub-Research question 2 – To what extent is there a predictive relationship between participating in an internship and post-graduation employment?

Logistic regression was defined as the probability through prediction that the dependent variable is based upon the independent categorical variable. There were four assumptions: 1) The dependent variable was categorical – yes or no – for post-graduation employment, 2) The independent variable was categorical – yes or no – for completed internship, 3) The dataset was independent of the dependent variable and also in an independent category, and 4) A linear relationship existed between the independent variable and transforming of the dependent variable.

The variance in the dependent variable – post-graduation employment - was provided by the SPSS software model summary which calculated the variation called Cox and Snell R Square and Nagelkerke R Square with the preferred and modification of the Cox and Snell R Square reported as Nagelkerke R Square. The result was 0.3%. If the estimated probability was

greater than or equal to the statistically significant level of 0.5, then the event occurred. If the estimated probability was less than or equal to 0.5, then the probability was the event did not occur.

The logistic regression predicted whether the dataset of the post-graduation employment was predicted from the completed internship category. The result was 0.3% which was less than 0.5, then the event did not occur. The completed internship category did not predict post-graduation employment. SPSS provided a classification table that presented the observed and predicted classification. If the probability of yes was greater than 0.5, then the category of yes status after graduation was employed. If the probability of yes was less than 0.5, then the category was no status of employment after graduation (see Table 5).

Table 5

<i>Logistic Regression Model Summary of Probability of Occurrence</i>			
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	728.635 <sup>a</sup>	.002	.003

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 3 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

The classification table provided the percentage correctly classified as not employed after graduation as 100% with the college internship participation as the independent variable added. The percentage of dataset that observed graduation status of yes employment correctly predicted by the model was 0%. The percentage of the dataset that did not correctly observe status after graduation prediction was 100%. SPSS provided the statistics of the variable in the equation table which showed the statistically significance of the contribution of the independent variable – completed internship (see Table 6).

Table 6

Classification Table of Correct Observation of Status of Graduation Prediction

<u>Step 1</u>	<u>Observed</u>	<u>Predicted</u> <u>StatusAfterGrad</u>		<u>Percentage</u> <u>Correct</u>
		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
StatusAfterGrad	Yes	0	226	.0
	No	0	310	100.0
Overall				57.8
Percentage				

a. The cut value is .500

The Wald Test provided the value of the statistical significance of the completed internship independent variable to the model equation. The significance of the test was 0.273 with the Wald Test result of 1.200. The significance was 0.273 which was greater than  $p = 0.05$  which showed completed internship participation did not add significantly to the model equation. Completing an internship was 1.2 times more likely to occur (see Table 7).

Table 7

Significance of Variables in the Model Equation for Completed Internship

		<u>B</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>Wald</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>Sig.</u>	<u>Exp(B)</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Upper</u>
Step	Completed_Intern (1)	.193	.176	1.200	1	.273	1.213	.859	1.712
1 <sup>a</sup>	Constant	.210	.130	2.605	1	.106	1.234		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Completed\_Intern.

In summary, a logistic regression was performed to determine the effect of college internship participation on the likelihood of post-graduation employment. The model explained 0.3% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in employment after graduation and correctly classified 57.8% of the dataset. Students were 1.2 times more likely to be employed after graduation.

**Conclusion**

Categorical variables were defined with meaningful data from the frequency of

occurrence of yes internship participation or no internship participation and yes post-graduation employment or no post-graduation employment. The dataset contained 538 students with 239 students that participated in a college internship which was a 44.4% frequency statistic. The frequency statistic for not participating in a college internship was 55.2% which equaled 297 students. There were two students that did not respond.

The Chi-Square Test was an independence test used to determine if a relationship existed between two categorical variables. The two categorical variables from the study were completed internship and employed as from the survey. The null hypothesis was there is no association between completed internship and employment from the dataset. The conclusion was that there was no association between internship completion and employed as responses from the dataset, and there was no statistical significance. The conclusion was no association between completed internship and employed or not employed post-graduation.

The logistic regression predicted whether the dataset of the post-graduation employment could be predicted from the completed internship category. The result was 0.3% which was less than 0.5, which indicated the event did not occur. The completed internship category did not predict post-graduation employment.

## **CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

College internship participation is a means to complement the higher educational experience of college students while preparing students to be work ready upon graduation. Higher educational institutions have partnered with employers to provide future employees for the employer through college internship participation. College students are able to solidify career goals while also obtaining future employment. The career services divisions at higher education institutions (HEIs) promote college internships as a pipeline to post-graduation employment. Whether internships are paid or not or even if internships are mandatory at HEIs, college internships provide a way for HEIs, college students, and employers to partner and collaborate to contribute to a thriving workforce and labor market. The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a link between college internship participation and post-graduation employment. A relationship between college internship and post-graduation employment may provide the avenue for HEIs to make the internship a mandatory part of the curriculum to further improve post-graduation employment.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The null hypothesis for this study was that there would be no statistically significant relationship between college internship participation and post-graduation employment. May 2018 graduates from Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee completed a survey that provided a secondary dataset that included responses on college internship participation and post-graduation employment. The historical dataset was analyzed for descriptive and inferential statistics by the SPSS software program.

First, the descriptive statistic performed was the frequency of occurrence of college

internship participation and post-graduation employment. The frequency indicated that more students were gainfully employed post-graduation versus participation in a college internship. Second, the Chi-Square Pearsons' Test was performed to test for the independence of internship participation and employment post-graduation. The result indicated there was no statistically significant relationship between internship participation and post-graduation. Last, the logistic regression was performed to test if internship participation could predict post-graduation employment with the result that there was no confidence in internship predicting employment.

The frequency of completed internship is 44% which is less than students that did not complete an internship which was 55%. The employment after graduation is 72% frequency with 28% still seeking employment. The results of the completed internship may explain the percentage of students seeking employment after graduation. With more internship participation, the frequency of graduates seeking employment after graduation may decrease through the use of an internship as a pipeline for future employment. The internship provides employers with future employee that are work-ready (Chillas, Marks, & Galloway, 2015).

The internship experience addresses complaints from employers to HEIs that college graduates are not competent in business and technical skills. The lack of internship participation may be attributed to the internship program at APSU not being a successful internship program. Elements of a successful internship program include assessments of the student, HEI, employer, workplace, and internship coordinator (Alpert et al., 2009). The APSU program may not promote recruitment and may rely on existing partnerships and not new alliances with local employers.

The internship coordinator may be a professor that has academic responsibilities that prevent adequate involvement to ensure the success of the intern, internship site (employer), or

institution. The academic department at the HEI may not promote internship. HEIs may not focus on building the internship program but just rely on career services as a job placement service just before graduation (Coker & Porter, 2015). If faculty are not on board with the internship program and see the benefit of future employment post-graduation, then the student will not gain exposure to the real-world work environment.

Another part of a successful internship program is gaining feedback from the stakeholders in the internship experience: students, HEIs, and employers. Students need to provide feedback, whether positive or negative, to determine if the internship site provided meaningful and relatable work assignments based upon career field. The frequency of students participating (44%) and gaining employment post-graduation (42%) are similar which may indicate that students successfully obtained employment from the internship site.

The Chi-Square Pearsons' Test results rejected the hypothesis that internship experience and post-graduation employment were related. The dataset did not describe if the post-graduation employees were gainfully employed at the internship site. The results did not indicate that there was a statistically significant relationship between internship and employment. Further research may examine how often student interns obtain employment from the internship site. The lack of participation in an internship indicated that students were already employed through the military. Students may not want to give up current employment to participate in an internship.

The logistic regression performed on the historical dataset indicated that college internship participation did not predict post-graduation employment. The researcher expected a different outcome that internship participation was a predictor of post-graduation employment. One explanation of the logistic regression outcome is that the university career services may



focus on pending graduation students and students at the sophomore or junior level. The career services may stress employment for pending graduation students as the finale to obtaining an undergraduate degree. There may be less stress for career services and the student if internship participation is recommended at the sophomore or junior level so that the employment pipeline is filled and the transition to post-graduation employment is a seamless transition.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The researcher may have gained the expected outcome of a relationship between internship participation and post-graduation employment with a more robust dataset that included more regional universities that will provide trends and comparison and contrast data. The student population may already be employed that would make internship participation more difficult. The researcher may add more variables for a more robust research study: 1) minority student internship participation compared to total student internship participation, or 2) internships that are mandatory based upon HEI program, or 3) paid internships.

Career services are continually improving with the survey to define trends in college graduates and assess student outcomes. One area for future research includes the role of career services not limited to internships but how career services contributes to the success of the student. Another area of future research is the impact of a paid internship versus unpaid internship. The frequency of nonparticipation of students in an internship may be improved by financial gain as an incentive where the student is provided financial aid along with work experience.

An area of future study includes an assessment of the student pre-and post-internship to better serve upcoming student interns and provide feedback to the HEI and employer. The 26% APSU graduates that are still seeking employment require additional assistance to obtain

employment and may need to determine if the student participated in an internship along with determining areas for improvement in a successful internship program. Include student response on negative experiences in the interest of improving the internship program. Students with positive internship experiences may continue with the internship site and not return to complete the undergraduate degree.

A research study may be impactful to examine highly successful internship sites and best practices for employers. The research can include on the job first year experiences of recent college graduates that participated in internships to examine the aptitude of student soft skills, knowledge, or team work ability and the student usage of such skills. The researcher did not determine the current employment rate for the area and determine the effect on post-graduation employment.

### **Limitations of Study**

One limitation of the study was the lack of diversity with variables. The researcher only analyzed internship participation and not the makeup and diversity of college students based upon age, current employment status, or field of study. If students were currently employed, then there was a low likelihood of the student having time to also participate in an internship. The survey did not disclose if the internship participations were paid or not and the survey did not indicate if the internship experience were counted as academic credit hours towards graduation.

Secondary datasets did not allow the researcher to ask additional questions pertinent to the student makeup such as college athlete with scheduling conflicts that prevent participation in internship experience. The researcher may have benefited by also conducting additional surveys to obtain more meaningful and robust data. The survey did not include whether a student

participated in more than one internship experience and that relationship to post-graduation employment.

A contribution to the lack of internship participation was that students may have gained experiential learning from life experiences or previous employment that may have already prepared the student for the career choice and there was no need for an internship experience. Kolb explained that people learn differently and that the learning style was influenced by environment, experience, and intellect of the person (Kolb, 1984). The diverging learning style of watching and feeling may have prevented the student from participating in a college internship. Kolb also explores that personal experiences shape the career and future employment of the graduate (Kolb, 1984). The life experience may not have included an internship but other employment opportunities prior to college or during college that would equally have prepared the student to be work ready.

One final limitation of the study was the usage of one HEI historical dataset in the study. The usage of one HEI limited the ability of the researcher to determine trends in the study, compare data, and contrast data from HEIs similar to APSU. The researcher attempted to glean historical data from Murray State University Office of Institutional Effectiveness without avail. The researcher also attempted historical data from the following databases without success: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), NACE, Kentucky Center for Statistics (Ky Stats), and the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE). The researcher surprisingly was able to obtain the readily accessible historical dataset from APSU.

## **Implications**

The data analysis of this research did not show statistical significance between internship participation and post-graduation employment. Students that did not participate in a

college internship outnumbered the students that did participate for the academic term of May 2018. 49% of the industry and academic leaders believe that HEIs are meeting student needs (Sauder et al., 2019). Even though college internships can serve as a bridge between the classroom and the work environment and improve the ability of HEIs to meet student needs, college students still do not participate.

According to Schmitt and Boushey (2012), people attend college for financial gains and benefits in employment after graduation. Again, college internships are a means for college students to create a pipeline for post-graduation employment for college students. For the class of 2019 college graduates, employment after graduation is linked to internship participation and higher pay is linked with college internship participation (“Job Offers for Class of 2019,” 2019). 57.5% of student interns had job offers after graduation, and 66.4% of paid interns received a job offer (“Job Offers for Class of 2019,” 2019). Statistical data supports college participation in internships to increase job offers after graduation even though this research study did not show statistical significance in internship participation.

There are reasons why students do not participate in a college internship. First, obligations to work for livelihood outside of attending HEIs account for 66% of college students with students working at least 20 hours per week are an explanation why students do not participate in an internship (Eisenbrey, 2013). Second, Students may be enticed to participate if academic credit is given for internship participation and if HEIs provide financial help with the costs associated with internships such as travel or lodging accommodations (Sauder et al., 2019).

Third, the increasing cost of attending college contributes to the lack of participation because students are already working to support college education (Schmitt & Boushey, 2012).

Fourth, students do not participate because of the variations that exist in the internship experience such as paid or not paid internships, time or commitment to internship such as a summer or weeks, academic credit or not for the internship, and last, an internship that is mandatory or not (Sauder et al., 2019). Lastly, students may not participate in an internship because of participation in previous internships (Sauder et al., 2019).

Effective internship programs must include input by primary stakeholders: students, HEIs, and employers. Successful internship programs attract college students to participate by demonstrating a linking between HEI curricula and practical application at a job site, partnering among the three primary stakeholders, and continuing feedback of the internship experience (Sauder et al., 2019). With continuous feedback, the likelihood decreases for a negative internship experience (Sauder et al., 2019). Students are interested in meaningful internship experiences through collaboration between HEIs and employers (Yiu & Law, 2012).

Successful internship programs involve a faculty internship coordinator that conducts internship site visits to ensure goals are met. An on-site dedicated internship supervisor that is the point of contact for the student intern contributes to an effective internship program. HEIs must conduct an orientation for students that addresses topics for the student and employer to review (Sauder et al., 2019). Primary stakeholders – students, HEIs, employers – express expected outcomes from the internship experience. Students desire internship supervisors on site, meaningful job tasks, an increase in technological skills, and experience in the professional field (Sauder et al., 2019; Verner, Keyser, & Morrow, 2005).

HEIs are seeking to gain a reputation for the internship program, and employers are seeking a job recruitment pool (Sauder et al., 2019). Verner et al. (2005) suggests expectations are detailed for the student, HEI, and employer through a learner agreement that contains the

objectives, job tasks, and homework assignments. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, or CAS, provides high performance practices for college internships that will encourage student participation. First, student interns require supervision at the internship site (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019). The student is aware of immediate support on site and can obtain feedback and communicate immediately with the supervisor.

Second, feedback is necessary for learning goals and adjustments need to be made if necessary (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019). With an onsite internship supervisor, the student is able to communicate concerns quickly and provide feedback to the supervisor if goals are not being met or are not aligned with the intended purpose of the internship. Third, the internship experience must provide high quality learning that may provide academic credit for the student (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019). The internship serves as a bridge between HEI classroom learning and the work environment so the student should benefit due to the learning goals that are met in the internship experience. Academic credit may be instituted in the HEI with making internship participation as a mandatory part of the curriculum.

As primary stakeholders, employers have avenues to improve student participation in college internships such as the provision of supervision for the intern at the job site (Yiu & Law, 2012). Again, on site supervision of the intern provides relief if there are any issues of questions regarding completion of the learning goals. The employer agrees to provide meaningful job tasks that are related to the field of study and the career and not just busy work to keep the student entertained (Yiu & Law, 2012). Last, the employers must provide learning goals and clearly defined employer internship expectations to ensure student success and clarity

of learning outcomes (Yiu & Law, 2012).

Schmitt and Boushey (2012) indicate that state agencies should institute policies that promote higher earnings for college graduates than high school graduates through decreasing the expenses of college to make college more affordable to students. State policies should also address the student debt burden after graduation (Schmitt & Boushey, 2012). State policies should provide any type of non-debt financial aid to students. One way that students may pay off student debt accrued through obtaining a college education is to have the student pay federal income tax after graduation based upon the student income after graduation (Schmitt and Boushey, 2012).

One existing policy is the student loan forgiveness program for students that are employed in positions of public service. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 indicates that students that repay student loans for 10 years are forgiven of loans (Schmitt and Boushey, 2012). Overall, Schmitt and Boushey indicate policy makers must institute policies that reduce the student debt and the cost of HEIs (2012). College students must have an increase in financial benefits for obtaining a college degree. Financial aid for college students must include more grants than loans because students are hesitant to incur debt (Schmitt and Boushey, 2012).

CAS standards indicate that HEIs should change policies that do not provide academic credit for college internship participation (2019). The CAS standards also promote college internship participation that is outside the student major field of study in order to gain academic credit. Some HEIs institute mandatory internship participation in the field of study. The college student will be exposed to multiple internships throughout the student academic career (CAS, 2019). Schmitt and Boushey (2012) indicate that the internship program should rely on the

career development or career services at the HEI to be the focal point of the primary stakeholders – students, HEIs, and employers. All stakeholders understand one central location to direct any concerns, and all stakeholders are following the same guidelines.

Federal government proposal by Representative Susan Bonamici of Oregon titled Opportunities for Success Act, H.R. 2659, made provisions for compensation for students participating in a full-time internship. The compensation is equivalent to minimum wage to pay for student lodging, meals, and transportation, with expenses not to exceed \$5000.00 (Eisenbrey, 2013). This proposal allows students that are already employed the opportunity for internship participation. The proposal provides living expenses for students unable to give up employment due to time or cost. Internships become more accessible by paying students to participate (Eisenbrey, 2013).

## **P-20 Implications**

This research study on college internship participation and post-graduation employment has implications in concepts and student learning outcomes of the P-20 and Community Leadership Doctoral Program at Murray State University. The first concept is stakeholders. A successful internship program that prepares college students to be work-ready depends upon primary stakeholders – students, HEIs, and employers. Stakeholders are interested parties that are vested and benefit from decisions of complex subject matter (R. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2015). Students are interested in participating in an internship program that solidifies career goals. HEIs are interested in the partnership with employers in the community along with building relationships with employers. Employers are interested in gaining a potential recruiting pool for future employees.

Another concept is collaboration. Education requires collaboration among different silos



or departments in order to gain solutions to complex problems. Collaboration means separate departments working together across borders to affect education, policy, and the global economy (R. Wilson, personal communication, December, 2015). Stakeholders also collaborate to achieve a successful internship program with detailed goals being met. HEIs collaborate with the community to develop new partnerships for internship sites.

Student learning outcomes include: innovation, diversity, implementation, and leadership. Innovation is developing solutions to complex problems (Murray State University Application, n.d.). Innovation can be utilized to determine how to gain more APSU student participation in internships. 55% of APSU graduating seniors did not participate in a college internship experience while 44% of graduating seniors did participate. Unemployed graduating seniors accounted for 28%.

The diversity student learning outcome is defined as an inclusive concept in decision making (Murray State University Application, n.d.). The historical dataset from APSU graduating seniors of 2018 did not disclose personal identifying information regarding underrepresented students such as minorities, working students, or nontraditional students. This information may have provided insight on trends, comparison, and contrast data. The dataset was obtained from APSU and other regional universities may have provided additional insight. Since the researcher is a student at Murray State University, the researcher had a heightened peak of interest. The statistical data from the results may cause difficulty in generalizations due to the limitations of the dataset.

A third student learning outcome of the doctoral program is implementation. Implementation is defined as a collaborative approach to instituting initiatives (Murray State University Application, n.d.). The initiative to implement mandatory college internship

participation will require an innovative approach because the research study did not support a relationship between internship participation and post-graduation employment. The researcher found data that supported internship participation to gain employment after graduation from subject matter expert such as NACE in order to promote mandatory internships. One competing factor for the May 2018 APSU graduating seniors is that the unemployment rate at the time of the study was the lowest in the southeast region and the eighth lowest unemployment rate in the nation which may have been an unknown confounding variable (Jordan, 2018).

The last student learning outcome of the doctoral program is leadership. Leadership is defined as mapping out the pathway to research, practices, and professional growth (Murray State University Application, n.d.). The researcher selected the dissertation topic of college internship participation and the potential link to post-graduation employment because focuses on the pipeline from preschool to employment of the student. College internship participation is a way for students to gain work experience while obtaining knowledge from the classroom which allows the student to gain professional growth and solidify career goals that ensures the student is work-ready.

### **Conclusion**

The skills gap can be explained with the economy, labor market trends, and employer lack of current technology, but HEIs can diminish the outcries from employers and legislators through generating a mandatory graduation requirement for all students to participate in a college internship. The mandatory internship requirement by HEIs can eliminate the debate with employers. Internships can provide more collaboration with the HEIs and employers to benefit the student success. Internships fill in the gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in the college classroom to the professional employment environment (Cappelli, 2015; Olson,

2015). Internships, provided by employers, give students the necessary practical skills and experience to prepare students for the post-graduation work environment.

The study found no correlation with internship participation and post-graduation employment for Austin Peay State University May 2018 graduates. Research indicated the benefits to stakeholders such as student post-graduation employment, HEI partnership with employers, and employers provided a preview of future employees. Disadvantages do exist that prevent internship participation but overwhelming evidence suggests that internship experiences are a pathway that link the HEI classroom and employment after graduation. The value of experiential learning theory by Kolb explains the internship experience as a hands-on way to build and enhance the career of the student. The study did not provide enough evidence to promote a mandatory internship experience for college students but the HEIs have a responsibility to offer internship experiences to enhance the educational experience of the student and provide a way for college students to compete in the labor market.

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## Appendix A

### IRB Exemption Determination Letter




**MURRAY STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**Institutional Review Board**

328 Wells Hall  
Murray, KY 40371-3318  
270-809-2916 • msu.irb@murraystate.edu

**TO:** Brian Bourke  
Educational Studies, Leadership & Counseling

**FROM:** Institutional Review Board  
Jonathan Baskin, IRB Coordinator 

**DATE:** May 1, 2019

**RE:** IRB # ODF 19-64

**Determination:** Individuals not identifiable - Activity does not involve human subjects as defined in 45 CFR 46.102(f)(2)

The MSU IRB has reviewed your student's application entitled, *Internships and Post-Graduate Employment*. Based on the information supplied on this application, it has been determined that your student's project does not involve activities and/or subjects that would require IRB review and oversight. Your IRB application will be kept on file in the IRB office for a period of 3 years.

Please note that there may be other Federal, State, or local laws and/or regulations that may apply to your project and any changes to the subjects, intent, or methodology of your project could change this determination. You are responsible for informing the IRB of any such changes so that an updated determination can be made. If you have any questions or require guidance, please contact the IRB Coordinator for assistance.

Thank you for providing information concerning your student's project.

*Opportunity  
afforded*

[murraystate.edu](http://murraystate.edu)

Opportunity afforded employs an opportunity as defined in 45 CFR 46.102(f)(2). It is not a research project and does not involve human subjects as defined in 45 CFR 46.102(f)(2). It is not a research project and does not involve human subjects as defined in 45 CFR 46.102(f)(2).

## Appendix B

### First Destination Survey Report

**AP Austin Peay**  
State University  
Career Services

# First Destination Survey Report

May 2018 Graduates  
Submitted by  
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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Methodology .....	5
College of Behavioral and Health Science .....	8
College of Business .....	12
College of Education .....	14
College of STEM.....	15
The Survey .....	17

## Executive Summary

The APSU First Destination Survey asks graduating seniors about their primary activity following graduation. Institutions can use the survey's results to assess employment- and career-related outcomes for college graduates up to one year after graduation and to report to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). The survey includes questions about the student's most recent experience and asks questions about their employment plans at the time of graduation. At six months after graduation, a follow up survey was sent to graduates that indicated they were still seeking employment after the first survey. Degrees confirmed for Associate and Master levels were not included in our report, only undergraduates receiving a bachelor's degree were calculated.

A total of 873 undergraduate degrees were awarded; total of 538 graduates responded to the survey resulting in an overall response rate of 61.6%. The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences produced the largest response rate of 62.8.7%. To achieve a higher response rate, we collaborated with the Office of Information Technology and the Office of Registrar to automatically populate the survey in graduating seniors AP OneStop account and sent out a Qualtrics survey.

Over 72% of the graduating class were employed, continuing their education, continuing military or on volunteer work assignments. While a third of the class were still seeking employment upon graduation.

For students who indicated they were "still seeking" employment follow-up contact was attempted to update the employment status to get a more complete summary of first destination outcomes. As defined by NACE, graduates who have not landed in any of the preceding categories and are known by the institution to be still pursuing a landing are identified as "still seeking an outcome."

The updated data indicated **72% of graduates are engaged** in employment opportunities such as, full-time or part-time work, continuing education, serving in the military, in full-time volunteer programs, or not seeking employment within six months of graduation that initially reported still seeking at the time of graduation. With **28% of graduates still seeking** six months after graduation.

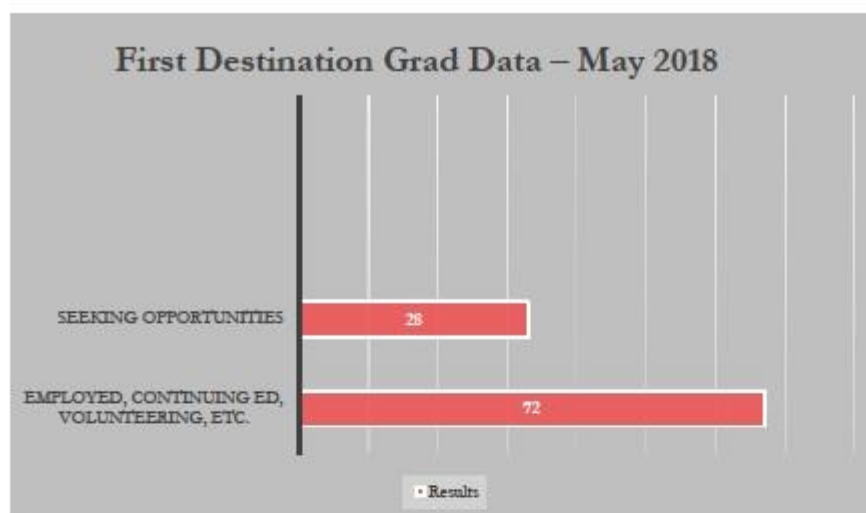
- 34% Gained full-time employment (on average of at least 30 hours or more per week)
- 8% Part-time employment (on average less than 30 hours per week)
- 0% Participating in a volunteer or service program (e.g. Peace Corps) after graduation
- 3% Serving in the military
- 24% Enrolled in a program of continuing education or planning to continue education
- 3% Not seeking employment nor continuing education at this time
- 72% Total (Employed, Continuing Ed, Volunteering, or Not Seeking)
- 28% Total graduates still seeking employment

It is important to note that the outcomes reported in this document are based on self-report data. The data reflect outcomes within six months of graduation for students graduating with a bachelor's degree; therefore, the outcomes do not project the long-term career prospects of these graduates.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tonika L. East, Ed.S., CDF  
Assistant Director of Career Services





Of the graduates who accepted positions in the State of Tennessee, the majority of those accepted positions were in the Middle Tennessee area. Tennessee's statewide unemployment rate is the lowest among its neighboring states in the southeast and it is the 8<sup>th</sup> lowest in the entire nation, as reported by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Workforce Insights & Reporting Engine Division ([tn.gov/workforce](http://tn.gov/workforce), 2018). The average reported starting salary for an Austin Peay State University May 2018 graduate was \$40,261. As career professionals, we know and understand the value of completing an internship prior to graduation. Nearly half (44.4%) of May 2018 graduates report completing at least one internship.

Data is collected in compliance with the US Department of Education and federal law supporting *Consumer Information Act for Student Right-to-Know*. The *Student Right-to-Know Act* requires schools to disclose: completion or graduation rates and, if applicable, transfer out rates for a specific cohort of the general student body. This cohort is of certificate- or degree-seeking, full-time, first-time undergraduate students.<sup>1</sup>

**Note:** The complete survey questionnaire is included later in this document for reference.



## Methodology

The questionnaire reflects the questions currently being asked by (NACE) the National Association of Colleges and Employers, which results are documented and published. Additional modifications may be made as deemed necessary by NACE.

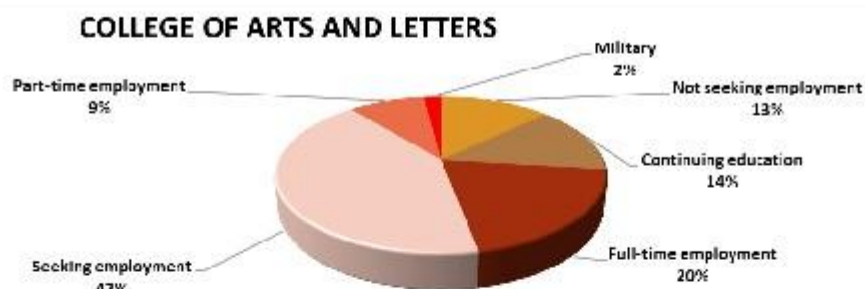
The survey administrator reviewed returned surveys for missing information and responses that would cause scanning errors. After analyzing the responses, they were imported into Microsoft® Excel and errors were checked against the individual forms. Data analysis was completed using Microsoft® Excel and placed into a Microsoft® Word format for reporting purposes. The reports are then uploaded on the Office of Career Services website and can be viewed at [www.apsu.edu/careers/about/career-outcomes.php](http://www.apsu.edu/careers/about/career-outcomes.php). NACE's First-Destination Survey captures information on how new college graduates fare in their careers within six months of graduation. The annual initiative provides clear, concise, and consistent data on the outcomes associated with a college education on a national scale. Degrees are confirmed by the Office of the Registrar at Austin Peay State University.

Students that indicated they were still seeking employment received an email providing them with resources and an offer to meet with a Career Advisor in the Office of Career Services to discuss their job search assistance. In addition, a follow-up call and/or email will be made 6 months after graduation to collect any data in their employment status. Data will then be reanalyzed with updated information and finalized in the follow-up report.

On behalf of the Office of Career Services at Austin Peay State University, we appreciate and value your input. In addition to providing outcomes for individual classes, *The First Destination Survey* is designed to provide trend data over time to inform the discussion about the value of higher education.

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Education. (2003). Student Right-to-Know Disclosures. Retrieved from <http://ifap.ed.gov/fahandbooks/attachments/0304Vol2Ch7ConsumerInformation.pdf>

## College of Arts and Letters



The College of Arts and Letters had a response rate of 58.6%, for the individual college, out of 150 awarded degrees, 88 graduates responded to the survey. Of the self-reported data 52.2% of the graduates stated they completed an internship. The noted internship sites were:

- Alpha Omicron Pi
- Asset Campus Housing
- Austin Peay Football Operations
- Austin Peay State University Public Relations & Marketing
- Austin Peay State University Quality Enhancement Plan
- CECA , The Center of Excellence for the Creative Arts
- Cheekwood Botanical Gardens & Museum of Art
- Clarksville Parks and Recreation
- Clarksville-Montgomery County School System
- Congressional Campaign of Mark Green
- Don F. Pratt Memorial Museum
- Five Star Media Group
- Fortera Credit Union
- Framemaker
- Gannett Design Studio - Nashville
- Grace Community Church
- Heckethorn Manufacturing
- Nashville Predators
- Nashville Sounds Baseball Club
- Public Defender's Office
- Stewart County High/Middle School
- Study Abroad and International Exchange

- U.S. House Committee on Small Business
- U.S. Navy
- United Methodist Communications; Dance Network TV
- Zone 3

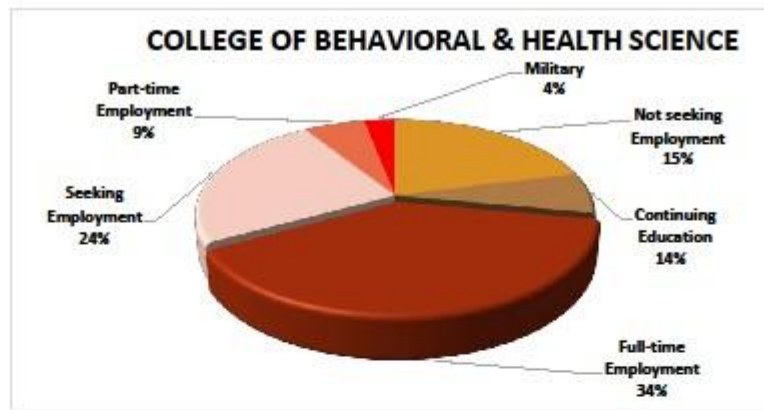
There were five employed graduates that indicated a salary for an average of \$28,800. Twenty-one percent of graduates reported full-time employment with the following companies:

- APSU PR and Marketing Team
- Austin Peay State University
- Cheekwood Garden
- First Baptist Church Clarksville
- Kohl's
- Nashville Design Studio - Nashville
- Planet Fitness
- tnsports360.com.
- UPS
- Zone 3

The College of Arts and Letter had 14% of graduates report they will attend the following graduate schools for future educational endeavors:

- Austin Peay State University
- Indiana University Jacobs School of Music
- Middle Tennessee State University
- The George Washington University
- University of Akron
- University of Kansas
- University of St. Thomas

## College of Behavioral and Health Science



The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences had an individual college response rate of 62.8%, out of 393 awarded degrees, 247 students responded. Of the self-reported data 47% of the graduates stated they completed an internship. The noted internship sites were:

- 3rd Brigade Physical Therapy
- Advanced Therapy Solutions
- All Smiles Family Dentistry
- Austin Peay Campus Police Department
- APSU Sports Performance
- APSU Veteran's Affairs Office
- APSU Disability Services Office
- APSU (Various Departments)
- Avalon Hospice
- Boys and Girls Club of Clarksville
- CBS News Channel 5
- Centerstone
- City of Clarksville
- Clarksville Academy
- Clarksville Nursing and Rehab Center
- Clarksville Ophthalmology
- Clarksville Police Department



- Crisis 211 Center
- Department of Children Services
- Dogwood Bend Assisted Living by Americare
- Erlanger Health Systems
- Gateway To Independence
- Grit Fitness and Wellness
- Hardin County DCBS Protection and Permanency
- High Pointe Physical Therapy
- Hope Pregnancy Center
- Leoma Elementary School
- Manna Cafe Ministries
- Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Care Center
- Montgomery County Health Department
- Montgomery County Juvenile Court
- Multiple Hospitals and Clinical Facilities
- Nashville Vascular and Vein Institute
- NorthCrest Medical Center
- Oak Plains Academy
- Palmyra Volunteer Fire Department
- Pennyroyal Veterans Center
- Prime Fitness Clarksville
- Progressive Insurance
- Red Cross
- Select Physical Therapy
- Senior Helpers
- Sexual Assault Center
- Signature Healthcare of Clarksville
- Sonic Drive-In
- St. Thomas West Hospital
- Sumner Regional Medical Center
- Tennessee General Assembly

- Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC)
- Tennessee State Veterans Home
- Tennova Healthcare - Clarksville
- The Kennedy Law Firm, PLLC
- Urban Ministries
- Vanderbilt Children's Hospital
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center
- Veterans Treatment Court
- YMCA
- YMCA of Dayton

There were 36 employed graduates that indicated a salary, for an average of \$43,854. Thirty-four percent of graduates reported full-time employment with the following companies:

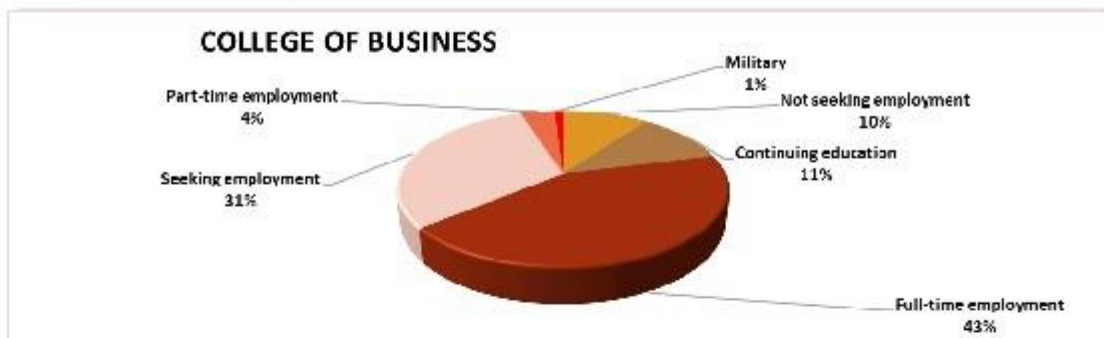
- CASA of Robertson County
- Autism Education and Therapy Center
- Bell Clinic, PLLC
- CMCSS
- Healthy Clarksville Mayoral Fitness Council
- Jackson Madison County General Hospital
- Lewis Health Center Hohenwald Tennessee
- Maury Regional Medical Center
- MCSO and CPD
- Monroe Carroll Jr. Children Hospital at Vanderbilt
- Montgomery County Human Resources
- Nursing School Clinical Sites
- Oklahoma State University
- Palmyra Healthcare
- Progressive Directions, Inc.
- Rafferty's
- Rossvie High School
- Sears
- Sexual Assault Center
- Spectrum Brands
- St. Thomas
- Sunrise Community

- Target Corp
- Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network
- Tennova Healthcare
- The Army and Air Force Exchange Service
- United Chiropractic, Dr. Metcalf
- Urban Ministries SafeHouse
- US Bank
- Vanderbilt Medical Center
- Victoria's Secret
- Wal-Mart

The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences had 14% of graduates report they will attend the following graduate schools for future educational endeavors:

- Austin Peay State University
- Belmont University College of Law
- Martin Methodist
- Middle Tennessee State University
- New Mexico State University
- Southern New Hampshire University
- Union University
- University of Central Florida
- University of Idaho School of Law
- University of Kentucky
- University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
- University of Tennessee at Knoxville
- University of Tennessee Health Science Center

## College of Business



The College of Business had a response rate of 62% for the individual college, out of 108 degrees awarded, 67 graduates responded. Of the self-reported data 36% of the graduates stated they completed an internship. The noted internship sites were:

- Adolfo's Son and Peterson Construction
- Appleton Harley-Davidson
- APSU
- APSU- Recreation Department
- Austin Peay State University- Athletics
- Chamber of Commerce
- City of Clarksville Parks and Recreation Special Events
- Clarksville Transit System
- Fortera
- HCA
- Keystone Realty and management
- Page Accounting & Tax Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Robert Johnson, Attorney at Law
- Sherrod CPA
- State Farm
- Stone, Rudolph and Henry, PLC
- Vanderbilt



There were 21 employed graduates that indicated a salary, for an average of \$39,905. Forty-three percent of graduates reported full-time employment with the following companies:

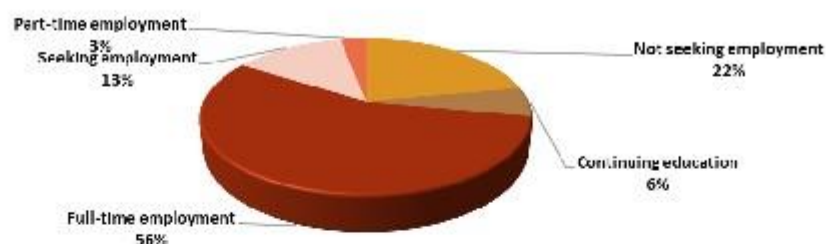
- Clarksville Montgomery County Community Action Center
- Stone, Rudolph & Henry
- The Youth Academy

The College of Business had 11% of graduates report they will attend the following graduate school for future educational endeavors:

- Auburn University
- Austin Peay State University
- Belmont University
- Cameron University
- University of South Carolina
- University of Southern California

## College of Education

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



The College of Education had a response rate of 60.3% for the individual college, of the 53 degrees awarded, 32 graduates responded. Of the self-reported data 41% of the graduates stated they completed an internship. The noted internship sites were:

- Clarksville Montgomery County School System
- Indian Lake Elementary (Hendersonville, TN)

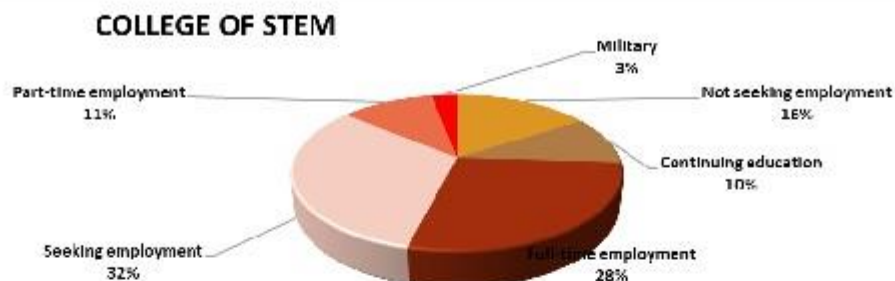
There were nine employed graduates that indicated a salary, for an average of \$37667. Thirty-one percent of graduates reported full-time employment with the following companies:

- Clarksville Montgomery County School System
- Primrose Daycare (Colorado)

The College of Education had 6% of graduates report they will attend the following graduate school for future educational endeavors:

- Austin Peay State University

## College of STEM



The College of STEM had a response rate of 61.5% for the individual college, with 169 awarded degrees and 104 graduates responded. Of the self-reported data 37.5% of the graduates stated they completed an internship. The noted internship sites included:

- Annual Joint Conference on Juvenile Justice
- APSU
- APSU- Office of Career Services
- Centennial Medical Center
- Cheatham County School System
- Clarksville Behavioral Health
- Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory
- Forefront Solutions
- Hashtag iFix iT, LLC
- Hospital Corporation of America (HCA)
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Jennie Stuart Medical Center
- Kroger
- Lawn Doctor
- Maury Regional Medical Center
- Montgomery County Democratic Party
- Montgomery County IT Department
- Nashville Animal Advocacy
- Nashville VA

- Nyrstar
- Pelham Valley Equestrian
- Premier Medical Group
- St. Thomas West Hospital
- Stone, Rudolph, and Henry
- Tennessee Bureau of Investigation
- Tennessee State Laboratory
- Tennova Healthcare Clarksville
- Tristar Skyline Medical Center
- Various clinics and hospitals
- Walt Disney World Resort

There were 16 employed graduates that indicated a salary, for an average of \$36,875. Twenty-eight percent of graduates reported full-time employment with the following companies:

- Best Buy
- Centennial Medical Center
- Hashtag iFix iT
- HCA
- Kroger
- Parallon Business Performance Group

The College of STEM had 10% of graduates report they will attend the following graduate schools for future educational endeavors:

- APSU
- Georgia State University
- Lipscomb University
- Union University
- University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry
- University of Tennessee Health Science Center
- UTHSC
- Vanderbilt

## The Survey

Congratulations on your pending graduation!

Due to reporting requirements by the Department of Education it is required that we report gainful employment outcomes of our graduates. We appreciate your time and request that you complete the short survey prior to your graduation from Austin Peay State University. All information provided to the University will remain confidential.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact us at 931-221-8544

Your Name—First, Middle, Last \_\_\_\_\_

Academic College \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Level \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Date \_\_\_\_\_

A number \_\_\_\_\_

A PSU email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Are you authorized to permanently work in the U.S.? Yes    No

**Which of the following BEST describes your PRIMARY status after graduation? Please select only ONE of the following categories:**

- Employed full time (on average 30 hours or more per week)
- Employed part time (on average less than 30 hours per week)
- Participating in a volunteer or service program (e.g., Peace Corps)
- Serving in the U.S. military
- Enrolled in a program of continuing education
- Seeking employment
- Planning to continue education but not yet enrolled
- Not seeking employment or continuing education at this time

**If your PRIMARY status is employed full time OR employed part-time, please select the category which BEST describes your employment:**

- Employed as an entrepreneur
- Employed in a temporary/contract work assignment
- Employed freelance
- Employed in a postgraduate internship or fellowship
- Employed in other work category

**If employed, please provide the following information concerning your employment:**

Employing organization \_\_\_\_\_

Position location—city, state, and country \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

If employed full time, annual base salary amount in U.S. dollars: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Guaranteed first-year bonus amount in U.S. dollars, if you are receiving one: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**If your PRIMARY status is participating in a volunteer or service program, please provide the following information about your assignment:**

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment location—city, state, and country \_\_\_\_\_

Role/Title \_\_\_\_\_

**If your PRIMARY status is serving with the U.S. military, please provide the following information about your assignment:**

Service Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_

**If your PRIMARY status is enrolled in a program of continuing education, please provide the following information concerning your education:**

Name of institution \_\_\_\_\_

Location of the institution—city, state, and country \_\_\_\_\_

Program of study \_\_\_\_\_

Degree you are pursuing \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you complete an internship, co-op, practicum, field study, or clinical, etc. prior to graduation?**

- Yes
- No

**If you completed an internship or co-op, practicum, field study, or clinical, etc. experience such as those listed above, please provide the following information concerning your employment:**

Employing organization \_\_\_\_\_

Position location—city, state, and country \_\_\_\_\_

Intern title \_\_\_\_\_

If paid, what was the hourly salary amount in U.S. dollars; If not paid enter N/A: \$ \_\_\_\_\_