

Internships Becoming Route To Jobs For MBA Students

By Diana Kunde
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Forget the job interview. These days, business students and employers are paying almost as much attention to the right internship.

In a tight labor market, companies like the inside track that an internship provides to the best and brightest job candidates. And MBA students know it.

"The competition for the choice, high-paid and high-profile internships is quite intense," said Jamie King, director of MBA career services at the University of Texas at Austin.

Summer internships have long been features of full-time MBA programs. But in recent years, the quality of these jobs has improved, university officials say. "There are more real projects instead of just doing the work no one had time to do during the

year," said Peter Veruki, director of career planning and placement for Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Business in Nashville, Tenn.

At the same time, the internship has become more of a dress rehearsal for the real thing. "More and more companies are using the internship program as a recruiting tool," Veruki said. The trend has accelerated over the last two to three years as the job market for top MBAs has tightened. "It's often called the three-month interview," he said.

In fact, some firms have gone so far as to cut back their offers to second-year MBA students, shifting their recruiting muscle to first-year interns, said Karen Dowd, who researches hiring at top graduate business schools for the consulting firm Brecker & Merryman in New York. "It's a very aggressive game," she said.

Nor is the phenomenon limited to MBA programs. As top schools have gradually gone to a five-year master's degree in accounting with a winter internship in the fourth year, intern recruiting has become critical, said Tanya Miller, who scouted interns for Ernst & Young's Dallas offices.

"It's what we'd like to see as our primary recruiting tool," said Miller, who estimates that 99 percent of Ernst & Young's master's degree interns in accounting end up working full time for the firm after graduation. All this means the pressure begins almost the minute an MBA candidate hits the campus during his or her first year. Recruiters arrive in the fall for get-to-know-you sessions, while students hone their resumes and start networking. Right after winter break, the courting gets serious.

Consider Jake Horstman, 26, of Baltimore, who's enrolled as a first-year MBA student at Vanderbilt's

Owen School. He figures he's spent about 15 hours a week on his job hunt since school began. "If you have four courses, you should view the fifth as job search," he said. With four years of experience in commercial banking, Horstman wants to move toward investment banking or finance, and the internship could help do that. Most of all, he wants a solid job offer.

"If I could get both a good summer experience and an offer, that would be ideal," he said. "With all the time and investment, it would be nice to return to school [next fall] with something in hand." Whether or not he accepts, getting an offer "increases your demand," he said.

Statistics on the relationship between MBA internships and job offers are hard to come by. But at Vanderbilt's Owen School, between 20 percent and 25 percent of the past two year's MBA graduates ended up working for their internship employer

after graduating. "At least 50 percent get offers," said Veruki of the MBA career office.

Does all this prematurely lock a student into a choice? It can happen, said Lois Jacobs, director of MBA career services at Southern Methodist University's Edwin L. Cox School of Business, who encourages MBA students to view the internship as part of their education. Most MBA students are career changers, Jacobs said. An engineer wants to acquire managerial skills, or a marketing major wants to move into finance. For these students, the ideal internship is one that allows them to bridge into a new specialty. Yet recruiters often lean toward someone who already has the relevant experience, she said. "So it's more than a little tricky" finding the right fit, she said.

Despite all the matchmaking, students and employers sometimes learn that they don't want a permanent

relationship. Steve Puricelli, an engineer in his second year at Vanderbilt's MBA program, is philosophical about discovering that he didn't want to be in aerospace, after a summer internship in Los Angeles for Allied Signal Inc.

"I'd been in an engineering role but had never really been on the business side. I learned a lot about myself what I'm good at, what I enjoy and what I don't enjoy. I gained a lot from that," said Puricelli, who is now targeting a range of manufacturers in his job hunt. "I have a lot of good stories from this summer. I have something for the resume," Puricelli said. "There are a lot of jobs out there."

Prosecutors Drop Murder Charges Against 7 In Murray State Dorm Fire

College Press Exchange

MURRAY, Ky. (CPX) - Prosecutors on Monday dropped murder and other felony charges against seven people accused of setting fire to a dormitory at Murray State University that killed one student and seriously injured a second.

The September blaze originally was blamed on hazing by members of a rugby club. The fire killed 9-year-old Michael Minger of Niceville, Fla., and left 21-year-old Michael Priddy of Paducah, Ky., with severe burns on his arms and back. Four other students were hospitalized locally, and 10 more were treated at the scene.

Prosecutor Mike Ward offered no explanation when he asked a judge to dismiss the charges, but he did say last week that there may be a new suspect in the case. According to the Associated Press, Ward declined after Monday's

hearing to give specific reasons for his request, saying only that an individual not charged "did some things that put a monkey wrench in our case."

Investigators initially said they believed that members of the rugby club set the fire as a hazing prank because all seven defendants - five of whom attended Murray State - either belonged to the group or knew some of its members. Felony charges against the seven included arson, assault and complicity. None of the defendants was in jail on Monday, and the only one charged with murder, 23-year-old Fred McGrath, who was not a student at Murray State, was freed on bail.

Despite the dismissals, four defendants still face misdemeanor charges of falsely reporting a fire, accusations that stem from telephone calls made before the blaze broke out. Defense attorneys have argued that the prank calls were a coincidence and

not evidence of any involvement with setting the fire.

Some defendants said they want Ward and other investigators to apologize for falsely accusing them - words Ward said they're not likely to hear. The defendants have little recourse because prosecutors and police are shielded from civil lawsuits by a concept known as "sovereign immunity."

McGrath told the AP that an apology wouldn't be enough to ease all the pain the charges against him have caused. "For (Ward) to apologize is patronizing," he said. "He can't give me and our family our Christmas back; he can't give us our New Year's or Thanksgiving back; he can't give us the attorney fees. Let him sit in jail for 26 days for something he didn't do."

Colleges should do more to stop sports gambling

College Press Exchange

SAN ANTONIO (CPX) - The worst problem affecting college sports today may be illegal gambling, and colleges and universities should do more to crack down on it, said NCAA president Cedric Dempsey.

"I challenge you to send a clear message that your athletics programs will not be used as the poker stake in sports wagering and point shaving,"

Dempsey told delegates at the National Collegiate Athletic Association's annual convention on Sunday. "We, all of us in college sports and higher education, must turn up the heat. We must take the

initiative to help uncover student bookie operations on our campuses."

The integrity of collegiate sports programs is already under fire and will continue to lose respect if schools don't do more to fight illegal gambling, he said. Dempsey also warned school officials not to "look the other way" when they know that boosters are betting on games and that students are wagering on campus.

"We have had more revelations of illegal sports wagering and point shaving in the last year," Dempsey added. "And, regrettably, we may have seen only the tip of the iceberg." Referring to point-shaving scandals in basketball at Northwestern

University and Arizona State University, Dempsey said illegal gambling is not a victimless crime.

"Ask Steven Smith or Dion Lee if what happened to them was a game," he said. "Ask their former universities if they feel victimized. Ask other student-athletes who competed with Smith and Lee if they have been made to feel guilty by association."

Lee pleaded guilty for scheming to fix three Northwestern basketball games in 1995 in exchange for money. Smith, the second career leading scorer at Arizona State, is awaiting sentencing for his role in a 1994 point-shaving scandal.

World and Nation

Flying 'Jesus' Convicted of Assaulting Airline Attendant

By Michael James
The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE - A federal judge convicted a Maryland man Tuesday of assaulting a flight attendant during an "air rage" incident aboard a Baltimore-bound plane, where the man touched off pandemonium when he went berserk after proclaiming himself to be Jesus. Judge Catherine C. Blake also rejected a defense plea that Dean William Trammel, 22, be found not criminally responsible.

Those on board testified during the five-day trial that Trammel had been polite and calm for the first several hours of the flight, which originated in Los Angeles. But as the plane approached Baltimore, the burly college student left his seat and began blessing nearby passengers.

He told a flight attendant that he was Jesus and, when she asked him to take his seat and prepare for landing, he replied that God had ordered him to remain standing for the rest of the trip. At one point he tried to get into the cockpit, saying he needed to bless the pilots because the

plane was about to crash, the flight attendant testified.

Passengers became unnerved by Trammel's behavior and some began yelling at him. At one point a flight attendant ordered him to sit down and put his seat belt on or she would sit on him and put it on for him, according to testimony. Moments later, Trammel was "flailing around with great strength" as crew members

saw stiff penalties are needed to deter further incidents of "air rage," the term used to describe a growing problem of attacks on planes worldwide.

Barry J. Pollack and James Wyda, the assistant U.S. public defenders representing Trammel, argued that a severe bipolar disorder caused Trammel to break with himself and reality. "He was Jesus Christ at that point," Wyda said, adding:

"He could not appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct."

But the judge, while acknowledging that Trammel "needs help," did not agree.

She cited his ability to control himself within moments of being restrained and to write a fairly accurate account of the incident about 40 minutes after landing in Baltimore.

Trammel, a Silver Spring resident and one-time football player at Santa Monica College in California, slumped over and buried his head in his hands when the verdict was read. Minutes later he hugged his father and grandfather, both ministers. Sentencing is scheduled for April 9.

tried to subdue him, Evans said. One of the flight attendants, Renee Sheffer, said Trammel threw her across three rows of seats and punched her in the face.

After several minutes of intense panic on board, in which several passengers were screaming and children were crying, Trammel was restrained and the plane landed.

The felony charge of which he was convicted, interfering with a flight attendant, carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Airline officials



English Immersion is an Unexpected Hit

By Louis Sahagun
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES - At elementary schools scattered across Los Angeles, teachers are delivering promising reports that their students are learning English more quickly than anticipated six months after the implementation of California's anti-bilingual education law, Proposition 227.

"I honestly didn't expect to see them achieve as well as they are doing," said Jose Posada, bilingual education coordinator at Los Angeles Elementary School in Koreatown. "Many of us who believed in the bilingual education program were scared about the unknowns," he said. "Now we're saying, 'Well, maybe it's not so bad. Maybe it's time we start talking about the positives.'"

In interviews at 13 Los Angeles Unified School District campuses with large immigrant populations, primary grade teachers said their students are absorbing verbal English at a surprising pace. Some children are even taking the next step and learning to read and write in English.

Still, many of these teachers and other educators question whether most of the youngsters have acquired the language skills necessary to comprehend math, reading or history lessons in English. Some suggest that students are imitating, or parroting,

their English-speaking teachers rather than thinking in the language. Many worry that the children are falling behind in their studies as they struggle with a new language and that they will not be ready to enter mainstream English classes within one year, as Proposition 227 calls for.

The depth of their English skills will become clearer after they take the Stanford 9 standardized tests in the spring. The test results, coupled with new state guidelines for rating English language development, will help schools determine at year's end which students should be placed in mainstream classes and which should remain in English immersion another year. The second-year option is allowed by Proposition 227.

In the meantime, educators are expressing cautious optimism that if students can say it, they get it. "We're off to a good start," said Maria Ochoa, district administrator for language acquisition.

Kris Gutierrez, associate professor of education at University of California, Los Angeles and a specialist in culture and learning in urban schools, agreed to a point. "Imitation can be one of the first stages of learning, if it is part of a larger strategy," she said. "But the development of oral language skills doesn't tell us much about

comprehension." Gutierrez said she also has heard positive reports from teachers, but still harbors some concerns. "I wish (the teachers) were saying, 'Juan is reading four books he wasn't reading before,' or that their kids were taking more books home," she said. "If they were really getting turned on by English, they'd be checking out books and at least pretending to read them."

Many teachers lament having to water down core subjects such as science and social studies for students who are just beginning to read and write in English. On the other hand, they are relieved that youngsters who spoke little or no English only months ago are generally at ease, even enthusiastic about their post-Proposition 227 reading and writing assignments. "I expected that their self-esteem would be affected, and that they would feel inhibited, give up easily," said Yomy Duran, a second-grade teacher at Dena Elementary School. "Instead, they are excited, motivated."

"One-fourth of my class can write. Yes, there are grammatical errors, but, hey, you read it," she added. "My biggest fear is whether I'm doing enough for them. Can I do more? But the fear of them standing still academically is gone."