



Department of Communication Studies

601 S. College Road
Wilmington, NC 28403-5933

Spring Communication Studies Interns,

There will be 32 COM interns in the field this spring in internships. As such, it is extremely important that we remain in contact via blackboard and email. Please know that your close attention to my requests for information and feedback are a vital part of your work as an intern. The timely nature and quality of your work will substantially influence your final semester PASS/FAIL evaluation. You should contact me at any time via e-mail, phone, or personal visit with questions or to request additional information. Please do not use the email feature in blackboard, email me at bulgert@uncw.edu.

First of all, CONGRATULATIONS! I hope you agree that the opportunity to serve as an intern is a privilege for both you and the host agency. As you know, an internship is not required to earn a bachelor of arts degree in communication studies. You are making a sacrifice in dedicating the extra effort to secure this experience and training. Be sure to make a point of that fact when discussing your internship with prospective employers and graduate school coordinators or selection committee members.

Unlike a conventional class, your only option in this course is to strive for an "A." Why? Because you not only represent yourself, but the university, Department of Communication Studies and, well, me! I have endorsed each of you with these agencies, assuring the approved supervisors that I am sending them some of our finest students, especially in terms of your dedication to the internship experience.

Please do not feel that I am primarily concerned with the agency. I will monitor most carefully the quality of your experience with your sponsoring site. These companies and supervisors have made a pledge to provide you with a substantive, educational experience. On some occasions, you may function as a staff member, performing clerical duties along with most other employees to meet a deadline. However, these circumstances should be rare. Most often, your duties should change, remaining fresh and challenging, to maximize your total experience.

You must do your part, though, with regard to maintaining an open dialogue with your supervisor(s) and co-workers. Be completely honest about what you hope to learn at the company. What are you curious about? What would you like to observe, even if you can not directly do the work at this time? Do not simply stand by and let your internship hours degenerate into repetitive tasks. Be **PROFESSIONALLY ASSERTIVE**. That is, take the initiative to communicate with those structuring and monitoring your work. **EARN** your credibility by being a reliable temporary employee, for instance by arriving on time if not a few minutes early. Always give your best. Ask questions. Take notes. Volunteer to perform as many types of duties as possible.

In terms of assignments as noted on the syllabus, know that all of our correspondence (whether in person, phone, e-mail, reports, papers, etc.) is strictly confidential. Discussions on blackboard are also confidential. I expect you to report on the positive and negative aspects of your experience. Always be *specific* in your analysis and, as often as possible, **connect your internship to other experiences, including your academic course work.**

I REQUIRE OUTSTANDING WRITING FROM MY STUDENTS. As COM majors, that talent should be one of your most valuable commodities. Consider each document a piece of professional writing. As such, your materials should be technically sound and aesthetically engaging. In addition to being free of mistakes such as spelling errors, sentence fragments, contractions, subject/verb agreement mistakes, and usage errors, be sure to employ "professional" language. Avoid slang such as "got," "a lot," "pretty good," "really nice," and other pedestrian phrases. **PROOF READ YOUR DOCUMENTS MULTIPLE TIMES, INCLUDING ALOUD.** Your Reflection/Progress Report #1 and Time Log (see syllabus for DUE DATE) will be scrutinized and critiqued in detail. I will assess subsequent reports, logs, and your final paper with the first set of materials in mind. That is, mistakes that appear a *second* time will result in a substantial deduction.

While you will not submit portfolio materials, I urge you to collect these items (as authorized by your agency supervisor) for placement in your COM 490 *Discipline Capstone* portfolio and, more importantly, the portfolio you will ultimately take into the market place. Artifacts generated while serving an internship will prove quite beneficial in pursuit of your professional career.

As requested and illustrated in the syllabus, in terms of your time log installments, for each work session be certain to accurately note your **START TIME, END TIME, HOURS WORKED, RUNNING TOTAL, and ACTIVITIES.** Such detailed records will help confirm the agency's account of your hours spent with the organization. Again, be sure to note the **HOURS WORKED** for a given session and the **RUNNING TOTAL** as you move through the semester. If you leave for lunch, please note this on your time sheet.

Well, that is enough for now, do not you agree?! Please read the attached syllabus carefully. For emphasis and clarity, in that document you will note that I revisit some of the topics featured in this cover letter. Please contact me at any time with questions or for additional information. Best wishes and make us proud!

Tammy

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