

**Professional Advising Leadership (PAL) Fellows Program**  
**May 15 – June 4, 2010**  
**Program Report by Kornelia Litkei, Hungary**

**PAL Program Description**

The Professional Advising Leadership (PAL) Fellows Program is designed for a research/study topic that is beneficial to the advising center, the region and the advising profession as a whole. The PAL Fellowship is sponsored by the U.S. DOS and administered by the College Board, combines leadership development with individual research in the form of personalized campus visits, meetings, training workshops and conference participation. PAL Program of 2010 was offered for 9 experienced EducationUSA advisers from all over the world, each focusing on a special topic. My research objective (back in 2008) was to obtain information about Internship for International Students as well as Career Services offered by higher education institutions and organizations in the U.S. This topic on internship opportunities was shared with Ola Augustyniak (Poland), already at the beginning of our program development we decided to divide it by geographic and subject field aspect.

We started in Washington DC where all the 9 PAL Fellows participated in an intense training about Leadership, Presentation and Communication Skills, Self-Assessment under the expert guidance of CollegeBoard staff and faculty consultant Deborah Hefferon. Fellows had the chance to a whole-day visit to State Department, where we learned updates on ECA's current strategic plans, marketing, social media, ethics in advising and study abroad objectives. Preceding our travels, six Modules of the on-line Self-Directed Orientation Program helped us plan and formulate our proposal and prepared us for the U.S. research phase of our project.

The second part of the program was individualized: I first went to New York, visited the School of Visual Arts, CDS and InterExchange (two visa sponsors), then traveled to Boston and visited Brandeis University, Wellesley College, Harvard University, Bentley University, Northeastern University and finally Boston University. In all my campus appointments I investigated how universities maintain resources for internship opportunities and what kind of services they provide for career development. My campus visits included meetings with career services directors, co-op program director, undergraduate career services advisers, global outreach and internship development director, career counselors as well as admissions information sessions and student-led campus tours.

The final section of the program took place in Kansas City at the Annual NAFSA Conference for a program debriefing, further individual appointments as well as participation in various sessions and networking opportunities related to our topics.

**Important Findings**

Short-term programs – among them internships - come in so many different formats and are very popular for a diverse range of international students. Advisees with potential interest in internship position come from the young audience/clientele advisers meet every day. These candidates think of internship as an educational investment for their future career therefore it is very important that they have realistic plans. The motivating factor is obviously to differentiate themselves in today's job market. To participate in an internship program potential candidates must work with one of the internship program designated sponsors. It is recommended that students visit the websites of several sponsors to compare costs and services (not all sponsors offer placement services, in that case students need to find their host employer on their own).

Facts about a foreign national intern:

- is currently enrolled as a full-time student in a foreign, post-secondary academic institution outside the U.S. or has graduated from such an institutions not more than 12 months.
- has high proficiency of English language skills.
- must be sponsored by a designated J-1 visa sponsor organization.
- has sufficient financial resources while in the U.S.
- J-1 visa enables to legally intern for a minimum of 6 weeks to 12 months.
- midterm and final evaluation required for programs that exceed six months.
- F-1 students are not eligible for internship but for CPT or OPT.
- is expected to return to home country upon completion of the program.

***Self-Assessment and Career Advising:*** University Career Development Centers offer professional career exploration for undecided students already from Day 1 of their higher education to discover their skills and evaluate their personal strength. Career counselors provide various self-assessment tools, resume writing workshops and career navigator, organize recruitment fairs and guide students in decision making.

***Name recognition:*** The brand name does count. International students typically want to work in a big city at a major company and earn a lot of money. They should realize that if they are working at a small company, they may be the only intern there and their portfolio might be a lot richer. The cost of living is considerably less in smaller cities.

***Co-op Advantage:*** Is an educational model that allows students to combine classroom learning with applied work of paid, full-time employment related to their academic major and career interest. Full-time undergraduates may complete up to three six-month co-ops during their five years at Northeastern University for example. Other universities with long traditional cooperative / experiential learning in the U.S.: Drexel University, University of Cincinnati, Georgia Tech, Rochester Institute of Technology, Wentworth Institute of Technology.

### **Useful Resources**

AIPT – [www.aipt.org](http://www.aipt.org) – Association for International Practical Training  
Alliance – [www.alliance-exchange.org/internship-exchange](http://www.alliance-exchange.org/internship-exchange) - list of intern sponsors  
CDS International – [www.cdsintl.org/internship-search](http://www.cdsintl.org/internship-search) - J visa sponsor  
Going Global - [www.goingglobal.com](http://www.goingglobal.com) – internships, CV, resume and visa requirements  
Designated J-visa sponsors list – <http://eca.state.gov/jexchanges> - U.S. Department of State official website for designated sponsors in 10 different occupational categories  
International Careers Consortium – [www.intlcareers.org](http://www.intlcareers.org)  
InterExchange – [www.interexchange.org](http://www.interexchange.org) – J visa sponsor for internships, summer camps  
Internship search – [www.internweb.com](http://www.internweb.com)  
Paid internship opportunities for international students - [www.usa-internships.com](http://www.usa-internships.com)  
Vault Guide for Top Internships– [www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com)  
Visa information – [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Next Steps**

The major outcome of the PAL internship research will be realized in a detailed handout or brochure that Ola and me are planning to put together. Part of the information can also be added to the online training. Participation in WIVA's (Work, Internship, Volunteering Abroad) working group to create best practices on various topics for the WIVA website is another opportunity to develop and share the resources I gained during my PAL meetings.