August 31, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for accepting one of our students as your intern this semester! The Communications faculty at Penn State Greater Allegheny wants our students to have as many opportunities as possible to learn real-world skills before they enter the job market. We know that our student will give his or her best to you, and we want to make sure that the internship serves as a significant educational experience. Penn State University follows Department of Labor guidelines regarding interns, and requires that all internship sites follow these rules as well. Doing so provides the best experience possible for both the intern and the place of business. The Department of Labor requires that all internships follow six criteria:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of an internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not necessarily entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

Because students are paying for the academic credits they are earning, and because interns are often rewarded in new experiences and the acquisition of new skills, rather than monetarily, they cannot be used as entry-level employees who only perform routine business tasks. Instead, interns can perform routine tasks that benefit the place of business only insomuch as this performance teaches the student new skills and improved work habits. In general, if you are teaching intern something new, and the bulk of the interns’ work does not replicate that of a paid employee, then you are performing within the spirit of the internship guidelines.

Furthermore, Penn State Greater Allegheny students are protected by the university’s sexual harassment policy, which is accessible online at: http://guru.psu.edu/policies/AD85.html.

Penn State Greater Allegheny places certain requirements on students to complete their internships. In general, the Communications program requires students to complete 50 hours of internship work per academic credit earned. For example, a 3-credit internship would require about 150 hours of work to complete. Students are also required, whenever possible, to create a portfolio of the work they have completed during their internship. Students use this portfolio to report on their internship to their academic supervisors and as an example of their work at future job interviews. Because of this, internship sites are urged to give student interns assignments that
would create entries for their portfolios, whether in the form of written work, digital creations and/or audio-visual materials.

Finally, want to ensure that our students live up to your high expectations and provide you with their best efforts. You can evaluate our students’ work at the end of the semester with the form posted on the Internships page of our website (accessible under ‘The Internship Process’):
http://sites.psu.edu/psugacomm/internships/.

Thank you again for sponsoring our student as your intern. Please do not hesitate to contact the Communications Internships Coordinator, Erica Clarke (eec16@psu.edu), or myself if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Zack Furness
Communications Program Coordinator
Assistant Professor of Communications
zackfurness@psu.edu