The Undergraduate Community-Based Internship Program Evaluation

2018 Cohort

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INTRODUCTION
The Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center Undergraduate Community Based Internship Program (UCBI) creates collaborative partnerships between dedicated undergraduate students and local non-profit and public-sector organizations. These partnerships actively allow students to engage in community-led work and to reflect on power, privilege, and oppression in the context of the greater community and within individual nonprofit Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The program places students at CBOs throughout the greater Seattle community and provides weekly on-campus programming. UCBI aims to increase community collaboration between the University of Washington (UW) and the surrounding community while eliminating financial barriers for CBOs and students. Participating CBOs increase capacity and receive support from student interns while students interested in public service are able to explore career path opportunities by receiving an educational stipend that enables them to participate in an internship experience. Students also participate in one-on-one mentoring with their Graduate Student Mentor and in small group meetings where they are able to receive professional and personal support from their peers.

In an effort to improve the program for future implementations and ensure a positive impact with students and host organizations, we administered the following program evaluation, which assesses supervisor and student satisfaction with UCBI during the 2018 winter/spring quarter cohort.

METHODS
The UCBI program evaluation was administered to 2018 winter/spring quarter participants through two separate surveys: one to all participating supervisors, and the other to all participating students. Most responses were Likert scale except for two qualitative free-responses at the end of the students’ survey and one free response question at the end of the supervisors’ survey. We received 26 responses out of 33 host organizations and 24 responses out of 34 students (a 78% and 70% response rate respectively). Findings and recommendations for next years’ cohort follow in this report. Finally, we compared supervisor and student survey results of this cohort to the previous years’ winter/spring quarter cohort, and in our analysis we indicate where there have been significant changes (10% decrease or increase) in supervisor and/or student satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS
This evaluation has several strengths and limitations to consider. The strengths include the ease of distribution, ease of data collection, and survey brevity. Since the survey is distributed electronically via Google Forms, sending the survey is quick and efficient. Google Forms provides a tool for data collection that automatically inserts survey responses into a spreadsheet, which is helpful for conducting an analysis of results. The survey is designed to be short enough that a student or supervisor could complete it in ten minutes or less, which we consider a reasonable amount of time to spend on a survey and is kept short to encourage maximum participation. Furthermore, using the Likert scale method provides a standardized scale for evaluating levels of satisfaction that is relatively easy to understand and comparable across program evaluations from previous years.
However, due to the brevity of the evaluation, the main limitation to consider when interpreting results is that Likert scale questions are on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Because students are self-reporting their opinions of the experience this results in subjective responses and opens the data's reliability to questioning. An additional challenge is that the survey questions provide a measure of agreement with a statement, but do not necessarily provide opportunity for the student or supervisor to indicate why they might or might not agree. Finally, in our analysis, we grouped together students who chose “strongly agree” or “agree” to statements provided because the difference between those two sentiments is subjective to every student or supervisor.

2018 UCBI PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

21 Acres  
Accelerator YMCA*  
APACEvotes  
Bloodworks NW  
Casa Latina  
Catholic Community Services Legal Action Center  
Chinese Information and Service Center  
Community Alliance for Global Justice  
Denise Louie Education Center  
East African Community Services  
Full Life Care  
Global to Local  
HealthPoint  
Horn of Africa Services  
InterIm Community Development Association  
Latino Community Fund of Washington State  
Literacy Source  
Neighborhood House  
OneAmerica  
Parent Trust for Washington Children  
Pike Market Senior Center  
PRIDE FOUNDATION  
Prison Scholar Fund  
ROOTS*  
Seattle CityClub  
Side by Side  
Skate Like a Girl  
Sustainable Seattle  
The Bureau of Fearless Ideas  
Treehouse  
Unemployment Law Project  
Yoga Behind Bars  
Youth Tutoring Program
STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Student Profile

One student participated in UCBI during the previous 2016-2017 cohort and 47% of students had participated in Carlson Center programming prior to joining UCBI.

Supervisors at Host Organizations

Overall, an overwhelming majority of students experienced supportive and available supervisors, worked on projects of interest, encountered opportunities for learning, and were provided with adequate work space.

- 100% of students said their supervisors were available and accessible when students had questions or concerns, a 10% increase from the previous 2016-2017 cohort.
- 100% of students felt like they were a part of the team at their host organization.
- 96% of participants stated that there were opportunities for learning at their host organization, which is a 16% increase from the previous 2016-2017 cohort.
- 96% of students stated that the work they performed was interesting to them.
- 91% of students were provided an adequate workspace.

Programming

According to students, UCBI provided a deeper insight into the nonprofit and/or public sector and increased students’ understanding of the issues their agency works to address. UCBI was effective in clarifying participants’ educational or career goals and in developing students’ professional skills. All participants would recommend the UCBI program.

- 100% of students reported feeling more knowledgeable about the nonprofit and/or public sector since participating in UCBI.
- 96% of students stated that they have a deeper understanding of the issues their organization faces since participating in UCBI.
- 91% of students said their professional skills and capacities have grown during this internship.
- 65% of students stated that the internship clarified or changed their educational and/or career goals. 26% responded neutral and 9% disagreed.
- 100% of students would recommend the UCBI to other UW students who are searching for experience in the non-profit/public sector.

UCBI Structure

This year, small groups were the most helpful means of supporting students and providing them with an engaging space to receive support from other peers. Individual meetings were also useful to help maintain communication with students. However, large group meetings weren’t always relevant. The large groups that are the most interesting to students were the panels with non-profit practitioners and the resume workshop.
65% of students said that the UCBI principles were helpful to guide and frame their UCBI experience (a 10% increase from the previous 2016-2017 cohort) and 35% were neutral.

65% of students stated that large group meetings were interesting and relevant and 30% were neutral.

Of all of the large group meetings, participants chose which meetings were the most relevant to them, and the results are displayed below.

![Bar chart showing which large group meetings were particularly relevant]

96% of students felt that individual meetings with their graduate student mentor were helpful, a 16% increase from the previous 2016-2017 cohort.

All students felt that their graduate mentor was a helpful resource during their internship, and that their mentor was knowledgeable and competent at leading small cohort meetings.

All students thought that they could effectively communicate with their graduate mentor.

**Professional Development**

83% of students received helpful feedback in their midpoint performance evaluation.

Students indicated the professional fields in which they are likely to seek paid or unpaid work after UCBI. Students were able to select all that apply. The results are displayed below.
Students’ Qualitative Responses

In addition to Likert scale responses, UBCI students were asked the following two short answer questions:

- Which aspects of UCBI were most helpful to your growth and development?
- Which aspects of UCBI detracted from your growth and development?

Overall, students’ responses to what was most helpful for their growth varied. Generally, the feedback is summarized in three types of benefits: 1) Meeting new students, 2) Structure of the program, and 3) Content of the programming. Students enjoyed the opportunity to meet other students doing similar internships and they appreciated learning with peers from different backgrounds and experiences.

Additionally, students valued mentorship from their Graduate Student Mentor, their internship, and Tuesday evening meetings. Students specifically reported enjoying small group meetings and the variation of different types of meetings (large group, small group, and individual meetings) as contributing to their growth. Students noted that UCBI provided valuable time and space for reflecting. Finally, some students found the Asset Map and Focus Project assignments to be particularly helpful for their learning.

Responses about what detracted from students’ learning varied less, with the biggest detractor being large group meetings. However, compared to the 2016-2017 cohort, there has been a 10% increase in the number of students who felt that large group meetings were relevant to their learning and professional development. Some students reported evaluations and the Asset Map assignment decreased learning, and one student noted that their nonprofit had limited resources to contribute towards the student’s learning.
In addition to the above responses, students were asked to voluntarily provide a narrative from their internship experience. Below are some highlights from students’ stories of their UCBI experience:

- “Coming into this program/internship, I didn't know what to expect but now that it is coming to an end, all that I can say is that I am grateful for this program. I have made connections/bonds with other interns/mentors and the kids that I worked with that I wouldn't trade. I grew as an individual and realized that if I am truly passionate about something I can accomplish it if I work hard at it. I also realized that my voice can make an impact in my community and with the people that I serve.”
  – Christelle Silue, Horn of Africa Services UCBI Student Intern

- “UCBI afforded me the opportunity to explore community-based work while providing a supportive peer network to learn with and from along the way.”
  – Cecilia Knaub, Seattle CityClub UCBI Student Intern

- “Large and small group meetings meant a lot to me and my UCBI experience. I felt comfortable and the energy was always so positive and strong. I looked forward to every Tuesday. It was a nice balance between school and work.”
  – Anna Kessler, Skate Like a Girl UCBI Student Intern

- “Small group meetings were sometimes the highlight of my week. Our group was able to identify and discuss some really pressing matters that are going on in our society today. Those meetings gave me a lot to think about and reflect on. I think I can honestly say I became a little bit better of a person from having such great conversations with the intelligent and diverse group of people I had in my group. Even though the larger group meetings seemed a little pointless to me, and the evaluations didn't really push me or help me grow, the small group meetings were really awesome and I appreciated the effort that was put forth by my group to dive into some uncomfortable issues.”
  – Baylee Corey, Treehouse UCBI Student Intern

SUPERVISOR REFLECTIONS

Communication with Graduate Student Mentors

In general, supervisors at host organizations were able to easily communicate with their Graduate Student Mentor and found that site visits were relatively useful to help maintain communication. Additionally, most supervisors were aware of the programmatic goals of the UCBI program.

- 92% of supervisors were able to easily communicate with their graduate student mentor.
- 73% of supervisors found site visits were helpful to improve communication with their graduate student mentor, a 11% decrease from the previous 2016-2017 group of supervisors.
- 92% of supervisors were aware of UCBI’s programmatic goals, a 24% increase from the previous 2016-2017 cohort.
• 88% of supervisors found that the learning agreement was useful in maintaining accountability with their intern and framing their work together, a 17% increase from the previous 2016-2017 cohort.

Interview Process
In general, site-supervisors were content with their interview pool and the majority prefer that UCBI staff screen applicants and help facilitate the selection process.

• 92% of supervisors were pleased with the applicant pool selected for their host organization
• 81% of supervisors thought that it was helpful that UCBI staff reviewed and curated undergraduate applicants and sent supervisors a group of interviewees. 19% of supervisors were neutral.
• Additionally, 12% of supervisors would have preferred that candidates applied to their organization directly. 42% of supervisors were neutral.

Program Requirements
The majority of site-supervisors found that the hours allotted and the focus project helped structure the internship.

• 96% of supervisors thought that the amount of weekly hours allotted for their intern was reasonable.
• The focus project helped 69% of supervisors create a specific, useful project for their intern (a 12% decrease from the previous 2016-2017 cohort). 27% were neutral and one supervisor disagreed with this statement.

Student Professionalism
All supervisors were pleased with their interns’ work and reported that students behaved ethically and professionally and were communicative.

• According to all supervisors, every student behaved ethically and professionally and produced work that supported their organization.
• All supervisors were able to effectively communicate with their intern
• 96% of supervisors were able to craft meaningful projects for their intern.
• According to all supervisors, every student was accountable for the completion of their work.

Future Planning
• All supervisors perceive their partnership with the Carlson Center to be valuable for their organization.
• 65% of supervisors clearly understand the opportunities available to partner with the Carlson Center (outside of UCBI). 23% of supervisors disagreed and 12% were neutral.
Additionally, we asked supervisors to consider their interest and capacity to cost share an internship stipend in future years. 5% of supervisors could contribute to the cost of hosting a UCBI student, 46% were neutral, and 50% could not contribute to this cost.

We also asked supervisors if they prefer that the Carlson Center continue to receive and filter applications and send supervisors the top 2-3 candidates to interview, or if supervisors prefer to receive and manage all applications directly. 65% of supervisors prefer the Carlson Center continue to filter applicants, 27% were neutral, and 8% prefer to receive and manage applications directly.

Qualitative Responses
Supervisors were asked one qualitative response question. Below are highlights from supervisor responses to: Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding your UCBI experience?

- “This was a very pleasant experience. The level of commitment shown by my intern was amazing. He truly brought a lot and made meaningful impact.”
  – LaKesha Kimbrough, The Greater Seattle Bureau of Fearless Ideas

- “I was very impressed by the organizational level of the UCBI intern program. Through interactions with my intern, it was clear that she was very supported through her program and knew what was expected of her in a way that wasn't overwhelming. I appreciated receiving my intern’s goals in a digital form and getting the opportunity to evaluate them to reflect upon their progress. Thank you for allowing Side-by-Side Preschool to partner with UCBI. It was a wonderful experience.”
  – Kelly Hampton, Side-by-Side

- “I am so grateful that we had the opportunity to be a part of UCBI again this year! Our intern this year was such an asset to our organization and a pleasure to work with. UCBI is a fantastic program; I appreciate how intentional and thoughtful all of the staff are.”
  – Annie Pigott, Youth Tutoring Program

RECOMMENDATIONS
Overall, our program evaluation of UCBI yielded overwhelmingly positive responses from both students and supervisors. Generally, students reported finding small groups fruitful for their personal and professional growth as well as the variation of meeting type. Supervisors’ awareness of UCBI programmatic goals increased from the previous year. Additionally, both students and supervisors noted positive, communicative, and helpful relationships with graduate student mentors. Moving forward, we will not recommend specific changes to these program components. However, in order to continue improving UCBI in future years, the following is a summation of students’ and supervisors’ evaluative feedback for programmatic changes:

1. In order to measure students’ self-reported growth in their awareness of social justice issues and the nonprofit sector due to their participation in UCBI, we recommend distributing a baseline survey to students at the start of their internship regarding their knowledge and background at the start of the program.
2. Due to the subjectivity of Likert scale responses, consider structuring the evaluation survey questions differently to collect richer and more in-depth feedback. For example, ask students to choose from several options that complete the sentence: “During my internship, I: had a supportive and accessible supervisor … had a difficult time communicating with my supervisor … completed a focus project that enriched my internship and my professional development …” and so on.

3. For next year’s large group meetings that aren’t interactive by design, determine how to build more student participation into meeting content.

4. Set clear goals and intended purposes for site visits early on. Before we begin scheduling site visits with supervisors, provide clarity for GSMs around the purpose of site visits, and discuss as a team whether or not the service learning staff should co-attend site visits with GSMs.

5. Begin discussing potential focus project ideas with students and staff earlier on in their internship, so as to ensure projects are more deeply tied to organizational needs.

6. UCBI should continue to receive student applications and provide supervisors with a list of selected applicants to interview, since 81% of supervisors preferred this application process.

7. If UCBI decides to pursue a cost-share model in the future, outreach to potential host organizations will require strategic inclusion of organizations who are capable of contributing to a student’s stipend. Moreover, this programmatic change will require thoughtful discussion and considerations around equity of participation from organizations.

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