Indiana INTERNnet and Internships in Indiana

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Indiana INTERNnet, Inc.

Research conducted by Indiana University:
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Acknowledgments

Many people contributed to this study of internships in Indiana and the role of Indiana INTERNnet, Inc. Here we focus on the people who conducted the research and facilitated access to the many gracious individuals in businesses, colleges and universities throughout the state who facilitated or responded to our surveys and participated in the focus groups and interviews.

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# Contents

## Executive Summary ................................................................. 1

## Introduction ................................................................. 6

Internships in the Spotlight ................................................................. 6
The Purpose of This Study ................................................................. 7

## Mixed-Methods Strategy ........................................... 9

Overview .............................................................................. 9
Promising Practices ........................................................................ 10
Focus Groups ........................................................................... 10
Key Informant Interviews .............................................................. 11
Surveys ...................................................................................... 11
  - Graduating Students ....................................................... 11
  - Recent Alumni .................................................................. 11
  - Employers ......................................................................... 12
A Centralized Information System for Indiana Internships .................. 12

## Findings .................................................................................. 14

What Difference Do Internships Make? ....................................... 14
  - Converting Interns to Employees .................................. 15
  - Internships and Overall Employment Prospects ............ 16
Internships and Brain Drain .......................................................... 18
  - Student and Alumni Survey Results ......................... 18
  - Summary ......................................................................... 22
Internship Search Strategies .......................................................... 22
  - Alumni ........................................................................... 22
  - Students ......................................................................... 24
  - Employers ....................................................................... 24
  - Colleges and Universities ........................................... 27
What Is Indiana INTERNnet’s Role in Facilitating Internships? ........ 28
  - INTERNnet Website Usage ........................................... 28
  - Focus Groups and Interviews .................................. 30
  - Employer Survey ......................................................... 31
  - Alumni Survey ........................................................... 33
  - Student Survey ............................................................ 35
  - Summary ......................................................................... 37
Case Study: Northeast Indiana Graduate Retention Program ............. 37
  - Conditions for Successful Internship Programs .......... 38
  - Ongoing Challenges .................................................... 39
  - Expansion and Future Program Development ............. 39
A Centralized Information System for Indiana Internships: Potential and Characteristics .......... 40
Advisory Group ............................................................................................................................................ 41

RECOMMENDATIONS ............................................................................................................................. 44

Continue to Foster Regional Internship Initiatives .................................................................................. 44
Targeted Engagement with Key Industries .................................................................................................. 44
Expanding Housing Options for Interns ..................................................................................................... 45
Continued Assistance for Smaller Employers, Smaller Schools and Nonprofits ...................................... 46
Making Finding the Right Match More Efficient ....................................................................................... 46
Employer Guidance and Training ............................................................................................................. 47
Recognizing Quality with a Seal of Approval ............................................................................................ 47
A Collaborative System for Information on Indiana Internships ............................................................... 49
Summary ....................................................................................................................................................... 49

APPENDICES
The appendices for this report are available at www.ibrc.indiana.edu/studies/internship/appendices.pdf

Index of Figures
Figure 1: Share of Interns Offered Full-Time Jobs by Their Intern Employers by Select Majors ....................... 16
Figure 2: Internships by Residence and State of Performance ......................................................................... 19
Figure 3: Prior to Accepting this Position, How Strong Was Your Preference for Leaving or Remaining in Indiana? .................................................................................................................................. 20
Figure 4: Share of Alumni Who Live in Indiana Now and Have a Positive Employment Outcome .................. 21
Figure 5: New INTERNnet Postings Made, 2001 to 2012 ............................................................................... 29
Figure 6: Percent of Employers Using INTERNnet Services .......................................................................... 32
Figure 7: Employers Response to the Helpfulness of INTERNnet Services and Resources ............................. 33
Figure 8: Of the Alumni that Have Heard of INTERNnet, Percent Using a Service or Resource .................... 34
Figure 9: Alumni Response to the Helpfulness of INTERNnet Services and Resources ..................................... 35
Figure 10: Of the Students that Have Heard of INTERNnet, Percent Using a Service or Resource .................. 36
Figure 11: Student Response to the Helpfulness of INTERNnet Services and Resources ............................... 36

Index of Tables
Table 1: What Percentage of Your Interns Do You Eventually Hire as Employees? ....................................... 15
Table 2: Post-Graduation Job Status for Graduating Students Who Completed an Internship ........................... 17
Table 3: Post-Graduation Job Status for Graduating Students with No Internship ........................................... 17
Table 4: Alumni: Which Option Best Describes Your Current Situation? ........................................................ 18
Table 5: Share of Alumni Living in Indiana Now by Academic Major ............................................................. 21
Table 6: Most Commonly Used Sources for Internship Information by Alumni ............................................... 23
Table 7: Responses to the Question of Whether Finding Qualified Interns Is Easy or Difficult ......................... 25
Table 8: Ease or Difficulty of Finding Qualified Interns as a Function of Organization Size ............................ 25
Table 9: Effectiveness of Employer Search Strategies ..................................................................................... 26
Table 10: Strategy Effectiveness Based on For-Profit or Nonprofit Charter .................................................. 26
Table 11: Helpfulness of the INTERNnet Website to Recruitment ................................................................. 31
Table 12: Advisory Working Group Members ................................................................................................. 42
Executive Summary

Internships can be a valuable pathway to employment for Indiana’s college students (and, increasingly, for adults without jobs). Internships can also help keep graduates in Indiana. Many colleges and universities offer internship opportunities to students, and some academic programs require an internship for certain majors or degrees. While internships have a long history in fields such as medicine, education and law, in today’s job market they have taken on more importance than ever across a range of fields.

The Battelle Technology Partnership Practice recommends scaling up internships in Indiana while advancing a statewide approach to career services. The study cited Indiana INTERNnet, Inc. (INTERNnet), a nonprofit corporation managed by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, as the logical and appropriate service program for these actions.

Recognizing that better information is needed to strengthen and guide internship programs in Indiana, Indiana INTERNnet commissioned the present study with support from Lilly Endowment Inc. The study was conducted jointly by two Indiana University research centers: the Indiana Business Research Center and the IU Public Policy Institute.

The project evaluated the role of internships in procuring relevant post-graduate employment for Indiana college students (with special attention to whether internships help retain talent in the state) and examined INTERNnet’s role in facilitating internship programs in Indiana.

The study used several methods to tackle these issues, starting with a review of the literature on internships, followed by focus groups with employers, interns and personnel representing college and university internship programs. The focus groups in turn informed personal interviews with a similar mix of stakeholders.

The findings of the above methods aided the design of a series of large-scale surveys targeting three key groups: Indiana employers, students nearing college graduation and recent alumni of Indiana institutions.

Findings
Whether discussing the impact of internships with employers, college personnel or students, the consensus of focus group and interview participants was clear: internships matter.

Many Indiana colleges and universities said they are increasing their experiential learning requirements to better prepare their students for future employment. Employer participants noted that they looked to current or past interns when adding to their workforce. Some former interns mentioned that an internship had helped them obtain their current position. Finally, many students mentioned that internships and resulting job offers helped keep them in Indiana.

The results from the Indiana employer survey reinforce the focus group and interview feedback. Nearly 55 percent of respondents considered a relevant internship to be either important or very important when hiring recent college graduates. Moreover, 59 percent agreed strongly or moderately that their internship program is an important tool for recruiting entry-level employees.

Internships and Overall Employment Prospects
Seventy-one percent of employers said they offer full-time jobs to their interns. Many students and alumni indicated that even if they did not work after graduation with the same employer with which they’d interned, the skills and knowledge obtained in their internships helped them land a full-time job.

Internships and Brain Drain
Among students and alumni who did their internships in Indiana, 16 percent accepted an Indiana-based job offer from the same employer. Moreover, nearly 37 percent of alumni who did not go to work for their Indiana internship employer after graduation said their internship experience helped them land a job with a different employer in the state.

Among those who completed an Indiana internship, 73 percent have had a positive outcome (i.e., they were in a job that requires a college degree, operating their own business, in the military or enrolled in another degree program) and still live in the state, compared to 64 percent of those who did not do an internship. Though not huge, this statistically significant difference reflects well on the influence internships can have in stemming brain drain.

Indiana internships can help retain out-of-state students. Forty-two percent of out-of-state respondents who went to school here and completed an internship in Indiana continue to live in the state and have had a positive employment outcome.
Internship Search Strategies
Key informant interviews revealed that Indiana colleges and universities employ a variety of strategies to help students learn about internship opportunities. The most popular sources of internship information that alumni and student survey respondents reported were their academic departments and faculty members.

When employers were asked to rate the effectiveness of their intern recruiting methods, relationships with faculty and academic departments were the strategies most favored. Half of them rated using INTERNnet to post internship opportunities as either strongly or moderately effective.

Usage of INTERNnet Services
More than 30,000 unique users visited INTERNnet’s website multiple times over the past six months. New visits and returning visitors were both well represented, a sign that the site engages new users and keeps prior users coming back. Overall, users provided positive feedback about the website. Many noted the resources for employers and internship assessment tools as valuable benefits. Several mentioned the site’s recently improved navigation.

The website is only one part of INTERNnet’s engagement strategy. INTERNnet partners with the Indiana Commission on Higher Education to implement the new EARN Indiana program targeting students with financial need. They participate in presentations and meetings with multiple industry, trade, career development and education groups statewide and nationally. Focus group participants believed INTERNnet adds credibility to internship programs in the state and appreciated INTERNnet staff participation in the various consortia, career fairs and other internship-focused events. They also mentioned that INTERNnet’s involvement helps schools with employer relations. This is an area of need for many schools that lack the resources to reach out to many employers.

Additional efforts have focused recently on fostering strategic partnerships with economic and workforce development initiatives. The Northeast Indiana Graduate Retention Project (GRP) was a notable extension of the work that INTERNnet has accomplished, supporting a regional partnership dedicated to working with employers to increase the number of internships by serving as its technology partner.

Advisory Group
A group of 14 stakeholders representing the higher education, business and nonprofit sectors was convened to advise and provide feedback on this study and on INTERNnet. They offered numerous suggestions to increase the impact of INTERNnet and internship opportunities in Indiana, and these have been incorporated into the following recommendations.
Recommendations

Foster More Regional Internship Initiatives
Focus groups and employer survey respondents cited Northeast Indiana’s GRP initiative through which employers and colleges pursue the goal of retaining talented and skilled graduates in the region. Other regions of Indiana could benefit from similar initiatives to connect educators, students and local employers through internships and other programs that improve the prospects for students to remain in the region after graduation. Building on the success of the Northeast Indiana experience and its connections statewide, and with the assistance of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce to link with regional chambers, INTERNnet could help other regional efforts get started or grow.

Engage Strategically with Target Sectors
INTERNnet has worked closely with a wide array of employers and industry associations to help them develop and manage internship programs, and thousands of firms have posted internships on the INTERNnet website. One of the promising practices reported in this study that could benefit Indiana is closer partnerships with major industry associations representing sectors the state is targeting for economic development. Such programs target growing sectors in their states, for which a growing pool of experienced labor will be needed. Supporting such internship programs could serve the joint objectives of giving students interested in these sectors needed experience while helping the targeted industries succeed.

Expand Housing Options for Interns
Many of Indiana’s colleges and universities are located in areas with few internship opportunities, and many of their students reside far from intern employers. For these students, finding internships where affordable housing is available for the summer or other brief periods is desirable. College personnel have suggested that organizing short-term housing programs to meet this need should be a high priority to expand internships in Indiana.

Continue Assistance for Smaller Employers, Smaller Schools and Nonprofits
Smaller employers experience more difficulty than larger firms in finding qualified interns. They are relatively less likely to have formal internship programs and staff dedicated to supporting them. Similarly, smaller colleges and universities generally have fewer resources dedicated to helping students land internships than do larger schools.
INTERNnet’s services, while useful to employers and schools of all sizes, could be of special value to the smaller organizations that are more challenged in finding and attracting good internship matches.

Make Finding the Right Match More Efficient
Of particular note and worthy of consideration is a service that many employers brought up: the ability to post an opening once on the INTERNnet website and have it automatically forwarded to the employer’s choice of participating schools’ career services offices.

Expand Employer Guidance and Training
Given the results of the interviews and surveys and focus groups, as well as the insights provided by the Advisory Group, now is a good time for INTERNNet to extend its review of the guidance and training materials for employers to determine if any need updating or improvement. Additional engagement tools could be provided to help students learn more about companies in Indiana.

Recognize Quality with a Seal of Approval
Not all internships are created equal. Some schools and academic departments have clear guidelines and processes for recognizing a given internship as meeting their requirements, but others do not. Given this mixed bag, the research team often heard from interviewees and focus group participants that they’d welcome some type of certification or formal recognition for “quality” internships, providing what could be considered a “seal of approval.”

Pursue a Collaborative System for Information on Indiana Internships
Currently, a wide range of approaches are used to collect and manage information about interns and internships. Many interviewees expressed interest in being able to submit data about their interns and internships to a central system (assuming it offers suitable security and confidentiality) in return for the useful feedback they could get from such a system.

While INTERNNet maintains data on the students and firms that have used its website, it does not include all Indiana internships and interns. Thus, clear insight into the full range of internships is currently elusive. INTERNNet should pursue development of an information system capable of efficiently gathering and managing such data to support needed analysis and monitoring over time, along with a plan to encourage schools and employers to participate. Such a system should leverage the Indiana Workforce Intelligence System to provide aggregated data to schools and interns about the employment outcomes of Indiana internships.
Introduction

Internships in the Spotlight
Internships seem to have become the coin of the realm for college students seeking to ensure employability. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman described a cartoon character speaking at commencement with the caption, “It’s an intern-eat-intern world.” The Wall Street Journal posited that internships are now the route to getting a job, while the American Society of Mechanical Engineers gives this advice to students: The internship IS the job interview.

Internships, or experiential learning, are widely regarded as a meaningful adjunct to traditional educational programs. They are also viewed by an increasing number of students and employers as a critical step on the path to post-graduation employment.

Many colleges and universities offer internship opportunities to students in their program of study and some academic programs include an internship among the requirements for the major or degree. While internships have a long history in fields such as medicine, education and law, in today’s job market they have taken on more importance than ever.

A recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) found that 63 percent of 2013 college graduates with paid internships had already received at least one job offer. The survey also found that paid internships resulted in higher starting salaries. Google made headlines recently when it was revealed that they paid as much as $6,000 a month to interns in a bid to capture the best technical talent among college students.

The Battelle Technology Partnership Practice recommends scaling up internships in Indiana while advancing a statewide approach to career services. The study cited Indiana INTERNnet, Inc. (INTERNnet) as a one-stop program around which such actions might be built. A significant step toward that goal occurred in May 2013 with the new

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partnership between INTERNnet and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s EARN (Employment Aid Readiness Network) Indiana program, which revamps the state-supported work-study program. This year EARN Indiana will open up internship opportunities for these students in both nonprofit and for-profit settings.

An Indiana study by Thomas P. Miller and Associates of experiential learning through work-study programs included recommendations that in many ways are already in use by INTERNnet: end-of-program feedback, technical assistance to employers and guidelines for employer participation to ensure effective employer participation.6

Of the multiple previous studies the study team reviewed for the present project, most found a correlation between experiential learning (internships and fellowships) and career success.7 The present study, focused specifically on Indiana, examined the role of internships in obtaining employment and the impact of INTERNnet.

The Purpose of This Study

Though many students, educators and employers view internships favorably, there has been relatively little in-depth, empirical assessment of the role they play in preparing students for professional careers beyond graduation. NACE, for example, surveys employers and students annually concerning internships to shed light on the roles internships play in recruiting and hiring new employees. Colleges and universities survey their students and alumni, and many may track results based on internships held, but this information is typically not widely reported.

Recognizing that better information is needed to strengthen and guide internship programs in Indiana, Indiana INTERNnet (a nonprofit corporation managed by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce) commissioned the present study, funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. The study was conducted jointly by two Indiana University research centers: the Indiana Business Research Center and the IU Public Policy Institute.

The project had two primary goals. First, it evaluated the role of internships in procuring relevant, meaningful post-graduate employment for Indiana college students, with special attention to whether internships help retain talent in the state. Second, the study examined INTERNnet’s role in facilitating Indiana’s internship programs and connecting Indiana employers with individuals seeking internships.


7 A listing of reports and articles reviewed for this study appears in Appendix G.
Additional objectives of the study were to assess the impact of internships on successful college completion, and the impact on Indiana employment of interns in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

A final study objective was to explore the potential for creating a central information system to be used by Indiana employers and academic institutions to track their interns’ outcomes and to compare outcomes across academic fields, industries and institutions.

The research team used a variety of methods to address these goals and objectives. The findings are organized around a series of key issues:

- What difference do internships make with regard to employment outcomes and remaining in Indiana after graduation?
- How do employers and internship-seeking students find each other?
- What is INTERNnet’s role in facilitating the internship process, and how do users respond to it?
- Is there potential for a central information system to capture and analyze data about Indiana internships and provide feedback to stakeholders? If so, what features and capabilities should such a system have?

Since a study of this kind has not previously existed in Indiana, this study creates a baseline against which to assess future progress. This report begins with an overview of the methods used to address these critical issues. Next, major findings from the study are presented and discussed at some length, noting additional insights that emerged as the research unfolded. Then the conclusions and recommendations are presented along with examples of promising practices to serve as a model for planning and implementation.

Note: We are happy to report that experiential learning opportunities were given to several graduate students in carrying out this study.
Mixed-Methods Strategy

Overview
No single research approach can satisfactorily answer the range of questions this study set out to address. Consequently, the research team used several methods to tackle these issues. The study began with a review of the literature on internships to identify interesting and promising practices of internship programs around the United States. This was followed by focus groups with employers, interns and personnel representing college and university internship programs. The focus groups in turn informed personal interviews with a similar mix of stakeholders.

The findings of the above methods aided the design of a series of large-scale surveys targeting three key groups: Indiana employers (including those who have sponsored interns and those who have not), students nearing graduation from postsecondary institutions and recent alumni of the same institutions. These surveys asked about the respondents’ internship experiences and how they sought to identify good matches of students to internship openings.8

The availability of a unique longitudinal database, the Indiana Workforce Intelligence System (IWIS), was also leveraged to glean information on how participation in internships may affect subsequent employment and retention of graduates in Indiana (see Appendix F).

Talks with those involved in the Northeast Indiana Graduate Retention Program provided insight into a partnership between INTERNnet and the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce that has created a regional model of cooperation for the establishment and expansion of internship programs.

Finally, convening an Advisory Working Group representing higher education, business and the nonprofit sectors, as well as a series of interviews with employers and college

8 The surveys defined an internship as a work experience with the following characteristics:
• Temporary, supervised work in a field relevant to the intern’s academic program
• Provides the intern practical experience
• Enhances the intern’s professional development
• May be a paid or unpaid position
Promising Practices
The identification of promising internship programs and experiential learning practices began with a literature review to identify leading organizations that promote best practices. These include NACE and The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. In addition, this review identified numerous examples of programs targeting STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields.

The emphasis then shifted to identifying examples of successful programs carried out by leading organizations. The selected programs provide examples of academic-, industry- and state-led programs, as well as several examples of regional efforts. These included a number of successful programs in Indiana and many others implemented in the Midwest. A listing of all highlighted programs appears in Appendix A.

Focus Groups
Two rounds of focus groups were held to support the evaluation. The first round fostered a better understanding of INTERNnet and internships in Indiana. The feedback received guided development of the key informant interview questions and the surveys of students, alumni and employers. The focus groups also provided insight into the data currently available on internships and their impact, as well as feedback on the role internships play in employers’ hiring decisions.

The research team held four focus groups in February 2013 to coincide with INTERNnet's IMPACT Awards luncheon. A total of 33 individuals participated in the discussions, including employers, school personnel (both secondary and postsecondary) and interns. Participants shared a variety of views on their experiences with interns and internships, INTERNnet and the role of internships in retaining talent in Indiana. Feedback from the focus groups is covered in the Findings section of the report. A full list of the questions and the organizations represented in the groups appears in Appendix B.

A second session was held in Fort Wayne to better understand the Northeast Indiana Graduate Retention Program (GRP). This program is an example of a partnership between Indiana INTERNnet and a regional organization where GRP staff is responsible for working with employers to implement internship programs. The Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce selected focus group participants based on their involvement in and knowledge of GRP. Invitations were emailed by INTERNnet with follow-ups made by both email and telephone to encourage participation.

This focus group was conducted in April 2013 with eight participants. Topics for discussion included the regional environment for retaining graduates before the
development of the program, lessons learned while building the program, INTERNnet’s role in the partnership, plans for the future of the GRP and advice for others aiming to create a similar system. More information regarding the GRP may be found in the Findings section of the report, and the full list of questions is included in Appendix B.

**Key Informant Interviews**

Key informant interviews were sought for all 39 colleges and universities participating in the Lilly Endowment’s multi-year *Initiative to Promote Opportunity through Educational Collaborations*. Feedback was obtained from 33 of the 39 schools, with participants ranging from presidents to career services staff, but the majority of participants served in career support or services roles.

Participants were offered the choice of telephone or in-person interviews. Thirty-one of the interviews were conducted by phone with two responding to the questions via email. Discussion topics included the role of internships and their coordination at the college or university, support provided to locate and secure internships, feedback on INTERNnet, data collected on internships and their impact, as well as gaps in data collection. Input from the interviews is included in the Findings section of the report. A copy of the invitation letter and a listing of all colleges and universities invited to participate are included in Appendix C, along with the discussion questions.

**Surveys**

Surveys were conducted with three target groups: Indiana college and university students nearing graduation, recent alumni of Indiana colleges and universities, and employers with a presence in Indiana. All three surveys were web-based, with invitations to participate distributed via email, as described below.9 Up to three follow-up email reminders were sent to encourage participation.

**Graduating Students**

The target population included students at all degree levels whose opportunity to participate in internships was mostly behind them. A total of 3,787 students from 14 schools completed the survey. Not unexpectedly, the largest numbers of responses were received from the public institutions that account for the majority of Indiana’s college enrollment.10

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10 Survey responses generally did not differ materially as a function of institution size.
Because some schools administered the survey directly and did not reveal how many students they contacted, the exact response rate cannot be determined. However, 9.3 percent of the students contacted directly by the research team completed the survey.

The student survey questions covered a variety of topics, including:

- Residency state, degree level and program, predisposition to remain in Indiana or to move elsewhere after graduation
- Internship participation and characteristics of their internship(s)
- How they searched for internships
- Post-internship employment and job offers
- Familiarity with INTERNnet, experience with and impressions of INTERNnet’s services

**Recent Alumni**
The same set of colleges and institutions were also asked to help the researchers contact their alumni who had graduated since May 2011. Recent graduates were targeted since their internship experiences were relatively recent and likely more clearly remembered. Also, this group would have been likely to use the most current version of the INTERNnet website. The questions asked of alumni closely mirrored those in the student survey. A total of 2,428 alumni completed the survey. For those the research team contacted directly, the response rate was 4.3 percent.

**Employers**
The research team originally planned to ask career services offices at the participating colleges and universities to provide lists and contact information for the firms that recruit from their schools, but the schools were generally reluctant to share such information.

Consequently, a different approach was used to reach and survey employers that recruit within Indiana. The Indiana Chamber of Commerce provided the researchers with a list of 12,236 members, and INTERNnet provided a list of 3,788 employers that had registered on its website. While the former list likely includes many firms that have not had interns, the INTERNnet list consists predominantly of organizations with direct experience or interest in having interns. Responses were received from 706 employers.

**A Centralized Information System for Indiana Internships**
To assess support and determine appropriate specifications for a centralized information system about internships in Indiana, structured interviews were held with key informants at a number of large, small and medium-sized colleges and universities, as
well as firms that regularly sponsor interns. Pertinent interview questions addressed the following:

- The size of their internship program
- The data they track about interns and the information system used
- What kinds of feedback or reports from a centralized information system they’d find useful
- What kinds of internship data they’d be willing to share with such a system and desired limitations on use of the data
- Whether a centralized system would need to link seamlessly with information systems they use in managing their internship program
- Whether they’d be willing to consider using a new statewide information system in addition to, or in lieu of, their current internship information system
- Whether INTERNnet would be a reasonable organization to manage a statewide centralized internship information system
- Any other comments or suggestions interviewees cared to offer
Findings

What Difference Do Internships Make?
One multi-year survey of business school graduates at a large southern university during the 1990s found that 43 percent of students who performed an internship had accepted a job offer at the time of their graduation compared to 26 percent for those with no internship experience.\(^{11}\) A different survey of recent business school graduates from a school in the northeast found that the average entry-level salary for those who had an internship was 9 percent higher than the average salary for non-interns.\(^{12}\) These findings are generally consistent with the results from the survey conducted of students and alumni from Indiana colleges.

When discussing the impact of internships with employers, schools and students, similar results were found. Whether in a focus group or a key informant interview, all participants agreed: internships matter.

Many Indiana colleges and universities reported that they are increasing their experiential learning requirements to better prepare their students for future employment. Employer participants noted that they looked to current or past interns when adding to their workforce. Some mentioned that an internship had helped them obtain their current position. Finally, many students mentioned that internships, and job offers that resulted from these opportunities, kept them in Indiana.

The results from the Indiana employer survey coincide with the focus group feedback. Nearly 55 percent of respondents indicated that they considered a relevant internship to be either important or very important when hiring recent college graduates. Moreover, 59 percent agreed strongly or moderately with the statement, “Our internship program is an important tool for recruiting entry-level employees.”


Converting Interns to Employees
Seventy-one percent of respondents to the employer survey stated they offer full-time jobs to some of their interns. For-profit employers are in a better position than nonprofit employers to hire regularly from their pool of interns. Thirty-six percent of for-profit companies reported that, in a typical year, they hire more than a quarter of their interns after graduation, compared to 16 percent for nonprofit employers.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>We typically hire:</th>
<th>All Employers</th>
<th>For-Profit Employers</th>
<th>Nonprofit Employers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% to 10% of our interns</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<td>11% to 25% of our interns</td>
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<td>26% to 40% of our interns</td>
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<td>41% to 60% of our interns</td>
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<td>81% to 100% of our interns</td>
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<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employers’ likelihood of offering full-time jobs to their interns was not significantly influenced by their use of some INTERNNnet services, such as using the employer’s guide, receiving advice from INTERNNnet staff, attending a presentation or receiving the newsletter. Employers were likelier to offer interns jobs if they had served on INTERNNnet’s employer advisory committee, listened to a broadcast interview involving INTERNNnet, participated in a workforce/economic development initiative that included INTERNNnet, or visited an INTERNNnet exhibit at a conference or expo.

When the hiring question was reframed to ask what percentage of an organization’s entry-level hires are typically filled by their own interns (current or past), 12 percent of Indiana employers surveyed said their interns account for at least two out of every five entry-level hires, and 64 percent responded that they hired upwards of 11 percent.

These results might at first seem at odds. Most employers indicated internships are an important recruiting tool, but the majority hire fewer than one-quarter of them to fill regular jobs. One reason is that internships can allow employers to identify the best prospects from a larger pool of interns. Additionally, many firms that utilize interns on a regular basis may not hire new entry-level employees every year, and their recent interns may still be pursuing their studies.

The student and alumni surveys offer further insight. These suggest that businesses do hire more of their own interns within certain types of occupations. Employers also have
a greater willingness or ability to offer paid internships in the fields with greater intern-to-employment conversion rates. This poses an opportunity for INTERNnet in regard to targeting employers that hire graduates in these high-demand fields.

**Figure 1** presents the job offer rates for all interns as well those for a handful of the most popular areas of study. Combining responses from the alumni and student surveys, 28 percent of the interns reported that their intern employer offered them a full-time job upon graduation. This number jumps to nearly 42 percent for paid interns.

These rates vary across academic majors. More than half of all paid interns in engineering and architecture, business, and information sciences fields of study received offers, and most of the internships in these high-demand fields were paid.

**Figure 1: Share of Interns Offered Full-Time Jobs by Their Intern Employers by Select Majors**

Internships and Overall Employment Prospects
Many respondents indicated that even if they did not work after graduation with the same employer with which they’d interned, the skills and knowledge obtained in their internships helped them land a full-time job.

**Table 2** shows that fully 52 percent of graduating students who’d had an internship had either accepted a position with their intern employer, or landed a job with a different

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13 The fields of study highlighted here were the five most common categories selected in the survey of current students. The research team focused on this survey alone in selecting the top five majors because this sample was far less skewed toward respondents from Indiana University than is the alumni survey.

14 Of all respondents, 55 percent had held paid internships.
employer that their internship experience helped them secure. By contrast, only 20 percent of graduating students who did not do an internship had a full-time job lined up for after graduation (see Table 3). The difference is even wider in the five largest fields of study.

### TABLE 2: POST-GRADUATION JOB STATUS FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED AN INTERNSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents who had an internship</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Top 5 Majors Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I landed a job with my intern employer</td>
<td>442 19%</td>
<td>306 28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My internship helped me land job w/ another employer</td>
<td>777 33%</td>
<td>397 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a job lined-up; internship didn't help</td>
<td>78 3%</td>
<td>39 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have a job lined-up</td>
<td>1,065 45%</td>
<td>349 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,362 100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,091 100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 3: POST-GRADUATION JOB STATUS FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS WITH NO INTERNSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents who did not have an internship</th>
<th>All Respondents</th>
<th>Top 5 Majors Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a job lined-up</td>
<td>250 20%</td>
<td>132 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have a job lined-up</td>
<td>1,019 80%</td>
<td>432 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,269 100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>564 100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey results also confirm the connection between the number of internships completed and employment prospects. Fifty-six percent of respondents with two or more internships stayed with an intern employer after graduation or used their internship experiences to help land a job. Forty-six percent of respondents who had held only one internship reported the same experience.

Most graduating students completed this survey in mid-to-late March 2013, giving them at least another month to find a job before graduation. As a result, the number of students with jobs would certainly be higher had the surveys been conducted in May. Of course, many other graduates will find a job soon after graduation. Shifting to the alumni survey, we can judge whether internships continue to affect employment prospects after the respondents left school.

Table 4 highlights the alumni respondents’ employment situations at the time of the survey. Among graduates who had participated in an internship, three-quarters responded that they are employed in a job requiring a degree or that they own a business. Respondents who had not participated in an internship were more than twice as likely to hold a job that did not require a college degree.
TABLE 4: ALUMNI: WHICH OPTION BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT SITUATION?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Did an Internship</th>
<th>Did Not Do an Internship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a full-time job that requires a college degree</td>
<td>1,021 (74%)</td>
<td>257 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a full-time job that does not require a degree</td>
<td>96 (7%)</td>
<td>64 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>74 (5%)</td>
<td>17 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in another degree or certificate program</td>
<td>117 (8%)</td>
<td>23 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating my own business</td>
<td>12 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed but looking for work</td>
<td>35 (3%)</td>
<td>7 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the military</td>
<td>3 (0%)</td>
<td>8 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31 (2%)</td>
<td>7 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,389 (100%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>384 (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen with the student survey, there is a modest positive relationship between alumni employment and the number of internships completed. For instance, 76 percent of alumni with two or more internships reported having a job that requires a college degree, compared to 70 percent for those with a single internship.

Given that survey respondents are fairly diverse with regard to field of study and degree level, it was possible that differences in the samples of interns and non-interns could skew these results. However, the gap in employment outcomes persists across academic major groupings and degree level, as detailed in Appendix D.

**Internships and Brain Drain**

Many Indiana education and workforce leaders hope that encouraging greater internship activity could help stem the brain drain of young professionals. It seems reasonable that if Indiana employers can connect with students before they leave campus, the chances of retaining such students in the state are better.

Moreover, employers may be likelier to remain or expand in areas where they can identify and recruit talent easily. The research team examined survey responses from graduating students and alumni for clues to the role of internships in stemming brain drain.

**Student and Alumni Survey Results**

Of the more than 4,000 respondents to the student and alumni surveys who reported completing an internship, two-thirds (2,735 respondents) did internships in Indiana. More than 80 percent of interns who were Indiana residents when they began their postsecondary study interned in Indiana. Of those who came from out of state, nearly
40 percent did an internship in Indiana. Thus, Indiana residents were much likelier than non-residents to do Indiana internships, but a sizable proportion of nonresidents got internship exposure to Indiana employment, too.

**Figure 2: Internships by Residence and State of Performance**

![Bar chart showing internships by residence and state of performance.]

- **Indiana Resident at Start of College**: 81% Internship in Indiana, 19% Internship outside Indiana.
- **Non-Indiana Resident at Start of College**: 39% Internship in Indiana, 61% Internship outside Indiana.

Note: This graphic combines results from the student and alumni surveys. For Indiana natives, the results from each survey are similar, but there is a modest difference between surveys for out-of-state students. Forty-two percent of interns from out of state in the student survey did their internships in Indiana compared to 35 percent in the alumni survey.

The surest way for internships to influence brain drain is for employers to convert their interns into full-time employees. Among the survey respondents who did their internships in the state, 16 percent of them (437 respondents) accepted an Indiana-based job offer from the same employer.

Indiana-based internships that don’t result in job offers from the same employer can still help to keep talent in the state. Nearly 37 percent of alumni who did not go to work for their Indiana-based intern employer after graduation reported that their internship experience helped them land a job with a different employer in the state. Twenty-six percent of graduating students reported the same. (The student number is lower than that of alumni since they had less time to secure a job and many had not yet lined up post-graduation jobs).

Most students and alumni who interned in Indiana and took a full-time job in the state wanted to remain in Indiana to begin with (see Figure 3). However, roughly one-quarter of both current students and alumni had either a strong or mild preference to leave Indiana before ultimately accepting an offer to stay, an indication that internships may...
help keep young professionals in the state. Moreover, those with higher initial preferences to remain in Indiana were even likelier to accept offers from their internship employers.

**FIGURE 3: PRIOR TO ACCEPTING THIS POSITION, HOW STRONG WAS YOUR PREFERENCE FOR LEAVING OR REMAINING IN INDIANA?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference Type</th>
<th>Accepted offer from intern employer</th>
<th>Internship experience helped land job with other employer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong preference to leave Indiana</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild preference to leave Indiana</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild preference to remain in Indiana</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong preference to remain in Indiana</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: These results represent only respondents who interned in Indiana and have accepted a full-time job in Indiana. This graphic combines results from the student and alumni surveys. Twenty-eight percent of alumni said they had a strong or mild preference to leave Indiana before accepting a job in the state compared to 23 percent of students.

**Alumni Survey Results on Remaining in Indiana**
The alumni survey also offers a comparison of the likelihood of interns and non-interns to remain in Indiana. **Figure 4** shows the share of alumni respondents in each of these groups who are still living in Indiana and have had a positive employment outcome since graduating.15 This gives us a rough measure of brain drain by internship status.

Among those who had an Indiana-based internship, 73 percent have had a positive outcome and still live in the state compared to 64 percent of those who did not do an internship. Though not huge, this statistically significant difference reflects well on the influence internships can have in stemming brain drain. However, the results are affected by the fact that alumni who had been out-of-state students comprise a larger share of the no-Indiana-internship group (44 percent) than of the Indiana-internship group (29 percent).

15 “Positive employment outcomes” include those alumni who are in a job that requires a college degree, operating their own business, in the military or enrolled in another degree program.
FIGURE 4: SHARE OF ALUMNI WHO LIVE IN INDIANA NOW AND HAVE A POSITIVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME

Looking only at alumni who had been in-state residents, an Indiana-based internship did not have any appreciable effect on whether an alumnus remained in the state or not. The small gap in this comparison (82 percent for interns to 80 percent for non-interns) is not statistically significant.

But the non-resident figures show that Indiana internships can help retain out-of-state students. Forty-two percent of out-of-state respondents who went to school here and completed an internship in Indiana continue to live in the state and have had a positive employment outcome. Only 30 percent of non-interns fit this description.

The alumni survey found that 61 percent of graduates stayed in Indiana, as shown in Table 5. Alumni in healthcare professions and education were the most likely to remain. Engineering, architecture, communication and journalism alumni were the most footloose of Indiana graduates.

### Table 5: Share of Alumni Living in Indiana Now by Academic Major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Major</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th># Living in Indiana Now</th>
<th>% Living in Indiana Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare professions</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal arts and humanities</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication, journalism, and related programs</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer, information and library sciences</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Summary

Internships, particular those in certain fields, most often lead to full-time employment. In many cases, internships also lead to graduates remaining in Indiana. These were the primary takeaways from the survey results.

### Internship Search Strategies

Responses from key informant interviews indicate that Indiana colleges and universities employ a variety of strategies to help students learn about internship opportunities.

The primary repository for internship opportunities at most schools is their online career services portal. Using tools available from several proprietary software vendors, the schools customize their sites for career fairs and internship postings. Respondents also spread the word about internships via career and internship fairs, workshops and job boards, newsletters and email notifications, faculty networks and contacts, social media such as Twitter and LinkedIn, personal contacts and networks, and, of course, INTERNNet.

In addition to the focus groups and key informant interviews, the three surveys (directed to alumni, students and employers) asked about the strategies and tools students and employers use to line up internships.

### Alumni

Both alumni who had held internships and those who had not were asked which search strategies they used to find internship opportunities (the survey let them select more than one, usage that was typical of most students). The most popular sources of internship information that alumni reported were an academic department or a faculty member, at least for those that secured an internship (see Table 6). Those who did not complete an internship appear to have used a greater number of information sources. Two-thirds of alumni who did not secure an internship reported that they used an “internship or career fair” as a source for information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th># Living in Indiana Now</th>
<th>% Living in Indiana Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration and social services</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological and biomedical sciences</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and architecture</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other majors</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,335</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,413</strong></td>
<td><strong>61%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Most Commonly Used Sources for Internship Information by Alumni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Internship Opportunity Information</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My academic department or school</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative or friend</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship or career fair</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacting the company or organization directly to ask about opportunities</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company’s or organization’s website</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My campus-wide career services office</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classmate</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other online service</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana INTERNnet website</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>1,678</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To a certain degree, the benefits of personal contact—e.g., employers getting scouting reports from faculty on the better prospects—trump web-based searches and connections. That said, additional tables available in Appendix D describe how search strategy varied based on number of internships and major.

Search strategy also varied with the location of the internship. For internships in Indiana, faculty members and the academic department were the most commonly cited sources for information. Those with internships out of state leaned heavily on relatives and friends, but the academic department was also cited by about a third of the respondents who had internships out of state. There was also a notable difference in approach between in- and out-of-state internship alumni. Out-of-state interns were much more likely to use company websites and intern/career fairs than the in-state interns.

It is important to note faculty were not part of the survey group and so we don’t know how many of them used INTERNnet to help their students find internships.
Students
Student and alumni responses were similar. Like the alumni results in Table 6, the most popular sources of internship information for students that secured an internship were an academic department or a faculty member. And, like alumni, students who did not complete an internship tended to use a more diverse set of information sources. Moreover, and as with alumni, using “internship or career fair” as a source for information was the most common source of information for students who did not complete an internship.16

Irrespective of the type of degree, the academic department or faculty member was the most common source for information for successful search strategy for those who completed an internship. That said, students in bachelor’s degree programs tended to also rely heavily on career/intern fairs and friends/relatives. Those in professional degree programs were also more likely to contact the company or organization directly than other degree types.

Employers
Which search strategies do employers use and find effective to recruit interns?

When asked how easy or difficult it is to recruit the number of qualified interns they need, nearly twice as many employers responded “easy” or “very easy” as those who indicated some degree of difficulty. Nonetheless, nearly a quarter reported some difficulty finding qualified interns.

The responses were generally consistent whether the organization was a for-profit company or a nonprofit. But as Table 7 shows, there was a difference in response between for-profit companies and nonprofits for those considering it difficult to find interns. Among nonprofits, 16 percent rated finding interns as difficult, compared to 24 percent of for-profit employers. As it happens, the entities responding that it was difficult were clustered in four industry sectors—information; professional and scientific services; business services; and healthcare and social services.

16 Analysis of responses from students and alumni that majored in STEM fields found little difference compared to responses from other majors. The only notable difference throughout the surveys was that STEM majors were likelier to use career/internship fairs to learn about internship opportunities.
**Table 7: Responses to the Question of Whether Finding Qualified Interns Is Easy or Difficult**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>For-Profit</th>
<th>Nonprofit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Easy</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Difficult</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of Respondents** 482 265 217

Whether finding a qualified intern was difficult or easy also depends on the size of the organization. Smaller organizations found it more difficult than larger ones, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Ease or Difficulty of Finding Qualified Interns as a Function of Organization Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Very Easy</th>
<th>Easy</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Very Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 10</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 24</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 49</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 99</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 to 499</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 or more</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about the major hurdles to recruiting an adequate number of qualified interns, 63 percent of respondents indicated that they could not find students with the right skills or education. Appendix D provides additional information on the obstacles employers face in finding qualified interns.

**Strategy Effectiveness**

When employers were asked to rate the effectiveness of their intern recruiting methods, relationships with faculty and academic departments were the strategies in greatest favor (see Table 9). More than 80 percent of respondents ranked faculty relationship as either strongly or moderately effective, compared to more than 70 percent for academic departments. Fifty percent agreed strongly or moderately that using INTERNnet to post an internship opportunity was effective.

17 These were nine separate rating questions, each answered by the number of respondents shown.
### Table 9: Effectiveness of Employer Search Strategies

Please rate the effectiveness of each of the recruiting methods that you use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through career services</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic departments</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with faculty</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting on own website</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNnet posting</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus career fairs</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online job sites</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Other&quot;*</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The two most frequently cited strategies for those who selected “other” were “word of mouth” (17 responses) and “referral” (7 responses).

If responses are tallied based on the charter of the organization—for-profit or nonprofit—a different pattern emerges. The responses were similar for the strategies viewed as being the most effective—academic departments, faculty relationships and career services—both for-profit and nonprofit. The experiences of the two types of organizations appear to be different for the other strategies (see Table 10). For-profits viewed posting on their own websites, career fairs, online job sites and independent on-campus recruiting as being more effective than the nonprofits. As a general rule, nonprofits ranked INTERNnet effectiveness more highly.

### Table 10: Strategy Effectiveness Based on For-Profit or Nonprofit Charter

| Strategy                          | Agree that strategy is effective
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For-profit</td>
<td>Nonprofit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting on own website</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus career fairs</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online job sites</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Other&quot;</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent on-campus recruiting</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNnet posting</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Agree responses include all three: strongly, moderately and slightly. Percentages are expressed as approximations for cleaner presentation.

Note: The effectiveness of using career services, academic departments and relationships with faculty was ranked essentially the same by for-profits and nonprofits, so those categories are omitted from this table.
There were several differences in how respondents viewed the effectiveness of strategies based on their size. The smallest entities—fewer than 10 employees—did not view career services offices favorably; 46 percent of the “disagree” responses for the effectiveness of career services were from entities with fewer than 10 employees. Conversely, large entities tended to view career services as effective.

The favorable responses—both strongly and moderately agree—were similar for the smaller size (less than 25) and larger size employers (100 or more) with regard to the effectiveness of working through academic departments and relationships with faculty. This was not the case for career fairs, where only larger entities tended to respond favorably. Independent on-campus recruiting appears to be the domain only of larger entities and, as a general rule, they strongly or moderately agreed that the strategy was effective.

The views on the effectiveness of web-based connections—INTERNnet, online job sites and own website—did not seem to depend on firm size. Regarding INTERNnet in particular, the combined responses of the two larger size categories was that 30 percent agreed that it was effective. For the smaller organizations, opinions varied widely.

Among larger organizations (more than 100 employees), the general impression is that online job sites are effective for finding interns. While not as positively disposed, smaller entities also considered online job sites to be effective. Regarding an organization’s own website for posting internship opportunities, the larger entities responded with strongly or moderately agree that their own website was effective by a roughly 2-to-1 margin compared to the smaller entities. There is an opportunity here for INTERNnet to consider how it works with smaller employers and consider marketing strategies in combination with training geared to small businesses.

**Colleges and Universities**

The search strategies pursued or recommended by the represented colleges and universities are similar to the survey results noted above. Response differences largely reflect the size of the school.

Larger schools report few problems recruiting numerous and large employers to campus, and internship opportunities for students include both in-state and out-of-state positions. On the other hand, the smaller schools—especially those in more rural areas of the state—often rely extensively on faculty contacts, alumni and college consortia to bring opportunities to their students. Both large and small schools reported offering grants, stipends, tuition waivers and housing assistance to increase internship participation.
It may be a challenge for INTERNnet to replicate the personal relationships of faculty and departmental contacts that have been cultivated over years or decades. INTERNnet personnel attend dozens of career fairs each year and conduct significant outreach to ensure that employers post their internships on the INTERNnet site. Smaller firms often need help in establishing internship programs, and INTERNnet could provide such “high-touch” assistance.

**What Is Indiana INTERNnet’s Role in Facilitating Internships?**

Indiana was ahead of the curve in 2001 with the advent of Indiana INTERNnet, a new digital and personal engagement service to facilitate internships.

It is important to note that INTERNnet combines Internet-based matching of employers and students with personal engagement. The staff works with schools and students at career fairs and other internship-related activities. They meet and provide guidance to employers and workforce and economic development partners on the best ways to establish and strengthen employer-based internships, as well as providing all businesses and students in the state with an easy-to-use location for posting or applying for internships.

The stated mission of INTERNnet is to increase the quantity and quality of experiential learning in Indiana in order to retain top talent. Using that mission as a guide, the research team looked at the metrics collected by the program to consider use and interaction with employers, schools and students.

While some survey responses indicate the INTERNnet website is only one of many sources used for internship information, other questions focused on a wide variety of INTERNnet’s features. These results, coupled with the feedback from the focus groups and interviews, help identify the most popular features and where INTERNnet can enhance future efforts.

**INTERNnet Website Usage**

Following its inception in 2001, numerous students and employers have registered each year on the INTERNnet site. Over the past 12 years, new employer registrations have fluctuated from 335 in its first year to a high of 537 in 2012. New student registrations reached 6,710 in 2012, up 47 percent from the prior year. Figure 5 shows that the number of new internship postings peaked in 2012 at 1,901 postings.
Website usage (as measured by Google Analytics) over the most recent six months reveals nearly half-a-million page views, an important metric for content-rich websites and especially ones providing résumés and pages of detail on companies and students. Moreover, nearly eight pages were viewed during an average visit. The pages-per-visit metric can also show that returning visitors have become better at using the site. Return visitors to INTERNnet viewed 7.3 pages per visit compared to 8.6 for new visitors. For comparison, monthly page views on the INTERNnet site are estimated by statshow.com to be lower than for internmichigan.com and higher than for ohiomeansinternships.com.

There were nearly 30,000 unique visitors to the site and a total of 55,000 visits over the six months. New visits (51 percent) and returning visitors (49 percent) were nearly even, a balance suggesting that users tend to be engaged with the site.

Students who have registered on the site represent more than 80 Indiana colleges and universities. Registration statistics for the year 2012 indicate 6,051 college/university students, 552 high school students, 62 graduate students, 28 post graduates and 17 non-students.

**High-Touch Engagement**

It’s worth repeating that INTERNnet is a service provider that does outreach-engagement in addition to web-based internship matching for students and employers. Dozens of colleges are visited each year by INTERNnet staff to discuss needs and for staff to interact with students and employers during career and job fairs.
INTERNnet’s reach and outreach are statewide. They participate in presentations and meetings with multiple industry, trade, career development and education groups. Examples include the Career Development Professionals of Indiana, the Indiana Construction Roundtable Partnership, Intern Bridge, YouTern, and the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Additional efforts have focused on fostering significant partnerships with economic and workforce development initiatives.

The IMPACT awards conference held each year to recognize outstanding internship activities by companies and student interns has seen increasing attendance and attention. INTERNnet staff answered more than 1,000 questions from online users between October 2011 and March 2013, and hundreds of calls were answered on the INTERNnet hotline. Moreover, INTERNnet has intensified its utilization of Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and other social media as ways to connect effectively with students, employers, colleges and universities.

Focus Groups and Interviews
Interviews were conducted with career-services representatives from 33 colleges and universities. When interview participants were asked specifically about INTERNnet, only one of the 33 participants had not heard of it. That one college had just recently added experiential learning to its curriculum and was pleased to learn of another resource to assist them. Of the remaining 32 schools, nearly all viewed it as a source for internships for their students and provided a link to INTERNnet on their websites. Similar results were obtained from the focus groups as most reported both awareness and use of INTERNnet.

Overall, the feedback obtained was positive. Many noted the resources on the site, including those for employers and internship assessments, as valuable benefits. Several mentioned the latest enhancements to the website that improved navigation. Furthermore, participants believed INTERNnet adds credibility to internship programs in the state and appreciated INTERNnet staff participation in the various consortia, career fairs and their presence on campuses. They also mentioned that INTERNnet’s involvement helps with employer relations. This is an area of need for many schools as they lack the resources to reach out to many employers.18

However, other respondents from colleges and universities reported that they viewed INTERNnet as a competitor for internship opportunities and postings, believing that most of the postings were for positions in central Indiana. They also mentioned that they

18 Further insight into participants’ views on INTERNnet are found in the Addendum to this report available at www.ibrc.indiana.edu/studies/internship/addendum.pdf.
perceived many INTERNnet postings are duplicates of those found on the schools’ own online portals—evidence that employers post openings on multiple sites.

Others pointed out that postings on the site should be checked to make sure they are timely and appropriate for those looking to do an internship since students are hesitant to return to a site if they do not find new, relevant postings on their initial visit. Since such comments have been received from multiple sources, and given that the INTERNnet database in 2011 was redesigned to remove inactive postings, it may be to INTERNnet’s benefit to communicate the improvements to its user constituencies, and perhaps consider additional ways to improve the timeliness of postings by students and employers.

**Employer Survey**

Of the 511 employer respondents, 80 percent had heard of INTERNnet. Of these, 60 percent reported having used the service. Of employer-users, 25 percent used it to post an internship opportunity and another 28 percent used it both to post an internship and to review résumés of student applicants. Utilization differed by organization size. Almost half of the larger organizations had used the INTERNnet website, while about 70 percent of smaller organizations had used the service to post and/or review résumés on the website.

When employers who had used the INTERNnet website were asked whether they had hired an intern as a result, 36 percent reported having done so. A vast majority (84 percent) of these said they had hired between one and five interns.

Although many employers use the website to identify prospective interns, it also offers several other services and features. Asked how helpful they find the INTERNnet website for recruiting, 86 percent (206) rated it as helpful to some degree, as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Helpfulness of the INTERNnet Website to Recruitment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely helpful</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately helpful</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly helpful</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not helpful</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some employer characteristics affected views on the website’s helpfulness. For example, 60 percent of nonprofit organizations found the website extremely or moderately helpful, while for-profits tended to rate its helpfulness somewhat lower. Larger organizations—100 employees or more—tended to rate the website extremely or
moderately helpful. And employers rating the website as extremely or moderately helpful were more likely to rate finding qualified interns as easy or very easy.

Several questions focused on which INTERNnet services employers used. Figure 6 shows the majority of employers that responded to the survey received the INTERNnet newsletter.

**FIGURE 6: PERCENT OF EMPLOYERS USING INTERNnet SERVICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percent of Employers Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receive the INTERNnet newsletter</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a presentation by INTERNnet</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited an exhibit at a conference</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Employer’s Guide to Internships</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in an initiative that included INTERNnet</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnered with INTERNnet to develop internship program</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heard about INTERNnet on TV or radio</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominated for an INTERNnet IMPACT Award</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve on INTERNnet’s advisory committee</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents: 246

While 17 percent had used the Employer’s Guide to Internships, it was ranked as the most helpful of the five services offered. Figure 7 shows the INTERNnet offerings that employers considered most helpful.

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19 The average score was derived by assigning responses points—3, 1, 0, -1, -3 for agree strongly to disagree strongly—and weighting the results by the number of responses.
**Alumni Survey**

Of the 2,356 alumni answering the question of whether they had heard of INTERNnet, 471 reported having heard of it. Of those, 370 had visited the website. Of those who visited the website, 40 percent had done so in the last year and another 30 percent had used it one to two years ago.

While most of the alumni who had heard of INTERNnet had visited the website, relatively few had searched for an internship there or used the other services (see Figure 8). In a separate question, 19 alumni (17 percent of the 114 that answered the question) reported that using the INTERNnet website resulted in obtaining an internship.
Figure 8: Of the alumni that have heard of INTERNnet, percent using a service or resource

Figure 9 shows how alumni rated the helpfulness of several INTERNnet services and resources. Although the information received in an INTERNnet presentation was rated quite highly, there were too few responses to this question to draw any conclusions. The information provided at a career fair was generally considered helpful or very helpful. INTERNnet’s printed materials were rated helpful or very helpful by 46 percent of respondents, while 35 percent rated the INTERNnet newsletter thusly. However, 28 percent were undecided regarding the newsletter, suggesting a lack of familiarity with it.

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20 The average score was derived by assigning responses points—3, 1, 0, -1, -3 for very helpful to very unhelpful—and weighting the results by the number of responses for that question.
**Student Survey**

Of the 3,610 students responding to the question about whether they were familiar with INTERNnet, 739 (20 percent) reported having heard of it, the same percentage as the alumni. Of those students, 570 had actually used the website—with 58 percent having used the website in the last year and another 31 percent having last used it one to two years ago.

Of the students that had heard of INTERNnet, 68 percent visited the website (but did not necessarily use the site), 39 percent searched for a job and 37 percent registered on the site (see Figure 10). In a separate question, 15 percent of the students using the INTERNnet website reported that it resulted in obtaining an internship.

Student ratings of the helpfulness of the top five INTERNnet services are shown in Figure 11.
**Figure 10: Of the Students that Have Heard of INTERNnet, Percent Using a Service or Resource**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percent Using</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit the INTERNnet website</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and/or apply for an internship</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register and create a profile</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get information from career center</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive the INTERNnet newsletter</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive printed materials</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited their booth at a career fair</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be nominated/receive an IMPACT award</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a presentation by INTERNnet</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11: Student Response to the Helpfulness of INTERNnet Services and Resources**

How Helpful Was the INTERNnet...

- Information at the career fair? (55 respondents)
- Website in your search? (441 respondents)
- Printed materials in your search? (48 respondents)
- Newsletter in your search? (56 respondents)
- Presentation in your search? (9 respondents)

*Too few students responded to draw any conclusions.*

A ranking score of zero indicates "undecided"/neutral. The greater the positive score, the more strongly students considered the service to be helpful.
Summary
According to the survey results, university students, past and present, tended to use on-campus resources to secure internships. Online, low-touch channels were not as popular with either students or employers. Nonprofit employers were most favorable toward INTERNnet. The larger for-profit businesses that did use INTERNnet tended to view the services and resources favorably. Those INTERNnet services involving personal contact—presentations or career fair interactions—were the most favorably viewed. Smaller entities were heavier users, most likely because INTERNnet provides services that they otherwise would not have access to.

While not explicitly asked in the survey nor during the focus groups and key informant interviews, based on how employers and students responded to the INTERNnet services they used and the search strategies that both groups considered most effective, personal interaction appears to be highly valued. This is reflected in the high helpfulness ratings for INTERNnet’s presence at career fairs and the guidance and support they provide.

Some of the survey results differ from the feedback received during the focus groups and interviews. While they noted some suggested improvements for INTERNnet, the focus group and interview participants were more likely to identify the program’s strengths and strongly support continued operation. It also identifies a potential disconnect between employers and students and career services and support efforts. Career services staff reported directing students to the INTERNnet website, but the survey results show that students are not following this direction. It may also help explain the reliance on personal contact in securing an internship.

Case Study: Northeast Indiana Graduate Retention Program
The Northeast Indiana Graduate Retention Program (GRP, formerly known as the Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce Graduate Retention Program) was developed as a concerted effort in the region to stem the loss of young, educated professionals from northeastern Indiana. To that end, GRP seeks to promote student internships and develop community partnerships to bridge the gap between industry and education. GRP was the vision of a handful of local civic leaders who believe strongly that the internship experience is important to the goal of retaining talented graduates, building a skilled workforce and fostering a vibrant economy. GRP utilizes INTERNnet as its primary tool to post and fill internships and they have been partners in the development of the website.

To better understand the successes and challenges of GRP, a focus group session was convened with the help of the IU Public Policy Institute (PPI). This session brought
together those who were involved in the creation of the program as well as current partners and supporters (see Appendix B for list of participants). The participants engaged in a productive discussion about the strategies and tactics that worked well throughout the development of the program, the challenges that GRP faced and how these challenges were addressed.

At its inception in 2004, GRP reached out to university presidents and local industry leaders to discuss the importance of internships and began building strong relationships that would prove integral to the program’s success. A commitment was made by six regional colleges, with support from the Lilly Endowment Inc., and has since expanded to include high school programs. To forge relationships with local industries and businesses, GRP pursued face-to-face, personal relationships by employing dedicated staff. Since the beginning of the program, GRP has grown to include 11 counties, working with nearly 3,000 regional employers. The GRP initiative may help to explain why employers in these 11 counties were more apt to respond in the employer survey that it is easy to find qualified interns.

Conditions for Successful Internship Programs
GRP’s impact in increasing the number of students that pursue internship experiences is due largely to the valuable regional partnerships and collaboration among educational institutions, industry leaders, local businesses and the technology partner INTERNnet. Industry and business leaders recognize the role internship programs play in developing a deep and growing talent pool. The members of the focus group agreed that the leadership of GRP and the Chamber helped guide the program and develop a vision for others to follow and support. Participants reported that students, academic institutions and businesses appreciated the Chamber acting as a central point of contact. This established a better line of communication between partners and provided direction and support for those looking for internships and those looking for interns. Much of the success of GRP was attributed to the relationship-building and communication skills of the field representatives actively working in the region to build relationships with employers and universities.

GRP serves as a “matchmaking” service for students and employers in the internship process using INTERNnet to support the matching. The group noted the convenience of having internship opportunities listed on one central website that multiple parties can

21 The 11 counties are Allen, Adams, DeKalb, Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells and Whitley.

22 The survey asked the county location of the employer. Other than ease of finding interns, there were no material differences between respondents in these 11 counties and the rest of the state.
access. From July 2004 to April 2013, 924 employers and 5,953 students in northeast Indiana registered on INTERNnet, resulting in 3,476 internships offered.  

Many universities have their own internship and career link portals. However, the focus group discussed the feasibility of INTERNnet replacing these separate systems and offering centralized data collection, while still allowing the schools to customize the interface to meet their needs. To be useful to universities, it would need several capabilities, including data reporting, module options and be usable for regular jobs as well as internships—all at an acceptable price. Beyond the functional capabilities of such a website, it must be easy to use for both external and internal parties.

Ongoing Challenges
One of the long-term challenges noted by the focus group is funding. It is difficult to create ongoing revenue strategies that attract and maintain broad support. As a result, leadership must always be seeking out new revenue streams and partners to ensure the sustainability of the program. The challenge can be addressed by establishing multiple funding sources and building buy-in from many partners.

Most current partners of GRP are small to midsize businesses. They need coaching and support to effectively implement an internship program, particularly when it comes to understanding how they can best support the intern while also benefiting from the experience. Even after a program is established, employers may face administrative and regulatory hurdles, such as unexpected costs, special insurance, and unfamiliar rules and regulations (HIPAA, OSHA, security clearance for defense industry partners, etc.). Therefore, it may be necessary to help businesses navigate these challenges. Finally, word travels. Bad experiences for employers or students can hurt the program. Addressing issues immediately (such as terminating an internship or communication problems with employers) is vital to ensuring the integrity and value of the program.

Expansion and Future Program Development
In its ninth year of existence, GRP and those who contributed to the program’s success offer many valuable lessons for other organizations that wish to establish a similar program. These lessons are useful for developing a vision, building a program, fostering partnerships and leading a broad coalition of interested parties to achieve a set of common goals.

The economic downturn has reshaped the workforce in ways that require academic institutions and industry-specific programs to rethink how internships and experiential learning programs best serve students seeking to enter or re-enter the job market.

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23 Data provided in handout: Graduate Retention Program Report Year 9, 2013.
Single-day, single-week or single-project internships would add more flexibility to experiential learning programs. Whether targeting those switching careers, returning to the workforce or the more traditional newcomer to the workforce, experiential learning programs must understand the needs within the communities they serve.

Because the economic recession left many seasoned workers unemployed, program administrators need to learn how paid internships can affect unemployment benefits. Programs designed to help workers re-enter the job market through career coaching and support may help in the job application and search process. This may entail helping older students navigate the technology for applying to jobs and internships, or simply providing career guidance.

To meet the challenges of the new economy and to retain top level talent, GRP has grown to support and promote programs beyond traditional internships and has started appealing to students before they reach college. GRP has developed and supported programs including consortia for high school educators, Industry to Educator Externship, TechFest, and Live, Learn, and Intern.

Consortia occur once a month during the school year to allow high school educators the opportunity to learn about industries and career opportunities in northeast Indiana and tie the knowledge into their classroom instruction.

The Industry to Educator Externship is a weeklong summer session for middle and high school educators to explore STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. The goal is to build relationships that may result in bringing guest speakers to the classroom or create collaboration opportunities between educators and industry representatives.

TechFest is a video game tournament and problem-solving competition where high school students can gain experience in STEM-related skills. TechFest also provides a platform for businesses and educators to collaborate to promote STEM teaching in the classroom and introduce students to the opportunities in STEM careers.

Live, Learn, and Intern is a schedule of summer events for interns designed to showcase the attractions and amenities of the region, to encourage them to remain in northeastern Indiana after their internships are over.

A Centralized Information System for Indiana Internships: Potential and Characteristics

Interviews with intern employers, directors of campus career services offices and other key stakeholders revealed a wide range of approaches to collecting and managing information about interns and internships. Not surprisingly, the larger schools and employers tended to use more comprehensive information systems that tracked a wide
array of details about the students, the employers, the internship experience and outcomes.

At campuses, these are often commercial systems that include features for managing campus recruiting activity and career placement services as well as internships. However, the larger universities often have different systems in use by different academic units across campus, with no central coordination or sharing of that information across units.24

Smaller colleges and universities tended to use less comprehensive approaches for gathering and managing internship information. Several schools, for example, reported tracking information about internships in Excel spreadsheets, with simple listings of which students had internships with which companies, not connected to the school’s larger student information system. Additional information such as internship assessment responses are often not captured in a database. On the employer side, information tracked about interns is often the same as for other employees, with only some firms (generally larger) systematically collecting data unique to the internship experience.

Thus, no universal approach to gathering and managing internship information throughout Indiana exists. Interviewees tended to believe that a single, statewide internship information system would not likely be adopted by all or even most players as a tool to help manage their internships, at least not in place of systems they already use. On the other hand, many interviewees expressed interest in being able to submit data about their interns and internships to a central system (assuming it offers suitable security and confidentiality) in return for the useful feedback they could get from such a system.

Appendix E provides more detailed guidance on the kinds of information a central system should compile, the kinds of feedback it should provide to users, how it could link to the Indiana Workforce Intelligence System (the statewide longitudinal data system linking education-to-workforce outcomes) to enhance the assessment of employment outcomes, and other considerations.

**Advisory Group**

To provide feedback on preliminary findings of the study and to further inform the researchers on internship issues, an advisory group of stakeholders was established. The group consisted of 14 members representing higher education, business and the

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24 At its 2013 conference, NACE indicated it is developing standard questions that all member schools would ask in their first-destination surveys. NACE would collect these student-level data annually from schools to support consolidated analysis using well-defined measures. They hope to begin the program in 2014.
nonprofit sectors (see Table 12). On April 30, 2013, the initial meeting of the advisory working group was held with 12 members in attendance.

**TABLE 12: ADVISORY WORKING GROUP MEMBERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Bland</td>
<td>Center for Leadership Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susie Clark</td>
<td>Indiana University, Kelley School of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Feeny</td>
<td>Independent Colleges of Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Hale</td>
<td>Indiana House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Harden</td>
<td>Hanover College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Hirons</td>
<td>Hirons and Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Holt</td>
<td>Conexus Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman Johnson</td>
<td>Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa Lubbers</td>
<td>Indiana Commission for Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Ludwick</td>
<td>Independent Colleges of Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Morris</td>
<td>Marian University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Peterson</td>
<td>Cook Group Incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David St. John</td>
<td>Cook Group Incorporated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.J. Thompson</td>
<td>Rook Consulting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meeting began by asking participants to share their experience with interns and internships. Many responded that they are seeing more post-graduates seeking internships. These students do not have full-time job offers when they graduate and often need more work experience or an opportunity to showcase their skills. An internship may also provide a mentoring opportunity, which was mentioned as a key to career success.

Hearing of the demand for post-graduation internships led some to ask if such students had internships while in school. It also transitioned the discussion to using data to better understand the impact of internships. Possible topics for analysis included looking at the profiles of students who interned and those who did not. They also mentioned looking at both in-state and out-of-state students and internships and their impact on employment options and choices.

The group spent quite a bit of time detailing and discussing the obstacles that exist to finding an intern and establishing internship programs. For some employers the thought of creating an internship program and supervising an intern is a bit overwhelming. This is especially true for small and mid-size employers. The point was made that the success found at the larger firms must be replicated at the smaller firms and in all regions of the
state. Increasing the number of internships at small and mid-size firms is a potential role for INTERNnet and is also crucial to increase the supply of internships in Indiana.

Throughout the discussion, there were numerous suggestions to increase the impact of INTERNnet and internship opportunities in Indiana. One set of suggestions focused on improving the usability and value of the INTERNnet site and included content enhancements such as blogs from employers and schools as well as discussion forums for those interested in developing or improving their internship programs. They also mentioned adding the capability to post an internship opportunity once on the INTERNnet site and having that post feed out to selected schools. Finally, the group suggested that the criteria for good internship programs be identified as well as developing a scorecard, ratings or certification system to highlight the better internships or employers.

Another set of suggestions centered on increasing the number and accessibility of internships. First, employers voiced their frustration with decentralized university systems for career services that make it more cumbersome for employers to identify qualified interns or choose one school over another. Considerable discussion also took place regarding helping summer interns secure housing. This idea had widespread support, would help students throughout the state and matched what the research team heard in the key informant interviews.
Recommendations

Building on the report findings, this section recommends actions for consideration by Indiana INTERNnet and others dedicated to strengthening the role of internships in cultivating the capabilities of Indiana’s workforce.

Continue to Foster Regional Internship Initiatives

Focus groups and employer survey respondents cited Northeast Indiana’s Graduate Retention Program (GRP) initiative through which employers and colleges pursue the goal of retaining talented and skilled graduates in the region. The program focuses especially on internships, partnering with INTERNnet to help connect students and employers through the INTERNnet website.

Much of the program’s success is attributable to the cooperation and connections that exist within the region. In doing so, the GRP is able to feed the internship pipeline from both ends—increasing both the number of internship opportunities as well as the number of applicants looking for an internship.

Other regions of Indiana could benefit from similar initiatives to connect educators, students and local employers through internships and other programs that improve the prospects for students to remain in the region after graduation. Building on the success of the northeast Indiana experience and its connections statewide, and with the assistance of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce to link with regional chambers, INTERNnet could help other regional efforts get started or grow.

Targeted Engagement with Key Industries

INTERNnet has worked closely with a wide array of employers and industry associations to help them develop and manage internship programs, and thousands of firms have posted internships on the INTERNnet website. One of the promising practices reported in this study that could benefit Indiana is closer partnerships with major industry associations representing sectors the state is targeting for economic development. Examples of such programs targeting the high-tech sector include:

- The Minnesota High Tech Association (MHTA), a partnership of hundreds of companies, government agencies and academic institutions designed to provide students with valuable hands-on experience and retain top-level talent in Minnesota’s workforce. In addition to numerous educational
programs and networking events, MHTA has the SciTechsperience Internship Program, which offers small and mid-size firms 50 percent matching funds (up to $2,500) to pay interns for participating in the program. www.mhta.org

- Ohio’s Third Frontier Internship Program, with goals similar to MHTA’s, offers high-tech firms internship subsidies of up to $3,000 annually. More than 800 Ohio firms have participated in this program. www.thirdfrontierintern.ohio.gov

These programs target growing sectors in their states, for which a growing pool of experienced labor will be needed. Supporting such internship programs could thus serve the joint objectives of giving students interested in these sectors needed experience while helping the targeted industries succeed.

Indiana has several industry associations serving the needs of targeted sectors, such as TechPoint, Conexus Indiana, BioCrossroads, OrthoWorx and Energy Systems Network. Continued engagement of leaders and members of such groups could lead to a larger number of internship opportunities tailored to their needs. INTERNnet could provide guidance and key support services for such sector-based initiatives. Moreover, the use of matching funds to subsidize intern wages, an integral factor in the Ohio and Minnesota programs, might be adapted in Indiana to leverage the EARN Indiana program.

**Expanding Housing Options for Interns**

Many of Indiana’s colleges and universities are located in areas with few internship opportunities, and many of their students reside far from intern employers. For these students, finding internships where affordable housing is available for the summer or other brief periods is desirable. College personnel have suggested that organizing short-term housing programs to meet this need should be a high priority to expand internships in Indiana.

Promising practices elsewhere model this idea. For instance, Xavier University in Cincinnati markets its Summer Intern Housing program to area businesses and industry groups. The housing program offers interns a variety of housing options, and it helps interns meet, network with and learn from other interns and connect one another to social events. The goal is to highlight the livability of the area, engage young professionals with the community, and show interns the region is a place where they can plant their roots and develop a career.

This model could be adapted to also work directly with multiple academic institutions’ career centers or internship directors. INTERNnet would be a logical organization to team up with Indiana schools, employers and other relevant parties to organize and publicize such new housing options for interns. The INTERNnet website could also feature information about housing opportunities for interns.
Continued Assistance for Smaller Employers, Smaller Schools and Nonprofits

Smaller employers experience more difficulty than larger firms in finding qualified interns. They are relatively less likely to have formal internship programs and staff dedicated to supporting them. Similarly, smaller colleges and universities generally have fewer resources dedicated to helping students land internships than do larger schools. Moreover, most nonprofit organizations, which frequently rely on interns to stretch their limited staffing budgets, tend not to focus substantial attention on recruiting interns or developing internship programs.

The MHTA program discussed above suggests one approach to help the smaller organizations with internships: target some internship-stipend matching funds specifically to small-to-mid-size employers. A related angle to pursue is developing donors to fund scholarships, stipends, etc. to subsidize internships. Donors might be found among the ranks of businesses and trade associations, university alumni, philanthropic organizations, and others who value the internship experience.

INTERNnet’s services, while useful to employers and schools of all sizes, could be of special value to the smaller organizations that are more challenged in finding and attracting good internship matches. INTERNnet should be a useful resource for small-to-mid-size firms and schools to facilitate connections between faculty and employers. And, as noted in the survey findings, nonprofits are heavier users of INTERNnet’s website than for-profit employers, perhaps reflecting a lack of resources to support campus visits, their own websites and so on.

Making Finding the Right Match More Efficient

Surveyed employers rated posting openings on the INTERNnet website as less effective than other ways to find suitable interns.25 Many of those who had used the site expressed frustrations in their comments about using it, referring to obsolete applicant profiles, perceptions that top students don’t use INTERNnet, and the challenge experienced in identifying qualified prospects among the list of matches the website provides.

Such frustrations are common with many internship-matching websites and any tools that require intense matching that produces spot-on results. INTERNnet reports having made significant improvements in a major website revision in May 2011 to clean up outdated postings and resumes. Some employers who were surveyed may possibly not

25 In fact, a recent NACE survey found that just 1 percent of employers’ recruiting budgets are allocated to online recruiting of any type for interns and co-op students.
be aware of these changes. The researchers, however, had no way to compare before-and-after-revision experiences of website users.

Improving algorithms to match students with internships is an ongoing quest being pursued by internship programs around the nation. INTERNnet should continue to refine its methods for matching and to consider including a natural-language search option as another way for students to identify internships that would interest them.

Of particular note and worthy of consideration is a service that many employers endorsed: the ability to post an opening once on the INTERNnet website and have it automatically forward to the employer’s choice of participating schools’ career services offices.

**Employer Guidance and Training**

Given the results of the interviews and surveys and focus groups, as well as the insights provided by the Advisory Group, now is a good time for INTERNnet to extend its review of the guidance and training materials for employers to determine if any need updating or improvement. For example, the INTERNnet newsletter, received by three-fourths of the surveyed employers, was not as highly rated for helpfulness when compared to other INTERNnet services such as the most-helpful rated Employer’s Guide to Internships. However, fewer than one in five employers surveyed had used the employer’s guide.

Additional engagement tools could be provided to help students learn more about companies in Indiana—for example, providing a link to GlassDoor.com, where employees anonymously share their impressions of working at tens of thousands of employers nationally. Finally, a more robust and interactive employer training component for the site, organized for small, medium and large firms, could extend the impact of INTERNnet’s employer resource support considering that there are tens of thousands of Indiana businesses (the majority of them small) that could potentially be drawn by an online training resource. One of the project advisory group employers, Cook Pharmica, has offered to share the materials it uses to train intern supervisors and offer a good internship experience.

**Recognizing Quality with a Seal of Approval**

Not all internships are created equal. Some schools and academic departments have clear guidelines and processes for recognizing a given internship as meeting their requirements, but others do not. Many internships are pursued not to meet academic requirements, but because the student wants the learning experience (not to mention a résumé item and summer income). Some students probably stretch the interpretation a bit to get a summer or part-time job counted as an internship, even if it doesn’t fit
accepted standards for internship experiences. Likewise, some employers may label as an internship a temporary job that doesn't have well-structured learning objectives.

Given this mixed bag, the research team often heard from interviewees and focus groups that they'd welcome some type of certification or formal recognition for “quality” internships, providing what could be considered (as one advisor said) a seal of approval.

This could help meet the challenge of finding the right match. Some universities and colleges award such certification themselves before an internship will be considered to meet a requirement or appear on a transcript. Although not all schools are likely to adopt an identical standard for certifying internships, the mere fact that an internship has been approved by the student’s institution warrants consideration for inclusion in INTERNNet’s internship information system.

Capturing this information would require specifying a process for schools to verify which completed internships they have certified. This could even become a field on student records reported by schools to the Indiana Commission on Higher Education (CHE). If it were recorded on student records across institutions and reflected in the CHE database, moreover, the reporting burden for schools to inform INTERNNet about certifications would be avoided, and the link between internship experiences and employment outcomes could be researched more effectively using the Indiana Workforce Intelligence System (IWIS).

A related initiative that INTERNNet could explore is implementing a “seal of approval” program for employers. The assessment forms available to interns and employers present vehicles for capturing post-internship feedback. Those employers that consistently win high marks from their interns could be recognized by INTERNNet. The ability for potential interns to know where one is more likely to have a good internship experience could noticeably increase usage of the website.

A further recommendation on the quality theme, as noted above, is to add a references feature to the student application process. This would be an opportunity to help employers sift the wheat from the chaff. One way the program and website could be extended to help facilitate that sifting function would be to provide a secure place for employers to view faculty recommendations of students. The student would have the option to enter the names and email addresses of faculty or past employers as references. The information system would then automatically send an email to each listed reference requesting a confidential letter of reference. That letter could be stored

26 For examples, see Florida State University (www.career.fsu.edu/cicp) and Texas Christian University (https://careers.tcu.edu/sg_userfiles/Internship_Certification_Program.pdf)
and forwarded with the student’s information for any subsequent internships for which
the student wishes to apply.

**A Collaborative System for Information on Indiana Internships**

INTERNnet maintains data on the students and firms that have registered on its website
and, in many cases, posted openings or résumés. But many Indiana internships and
interns are not included there, so clear insight into the full range of internships is currently
elusive. The willingness of many schools and employers to consider providing some data
on their interns to a secure central database is an encouraging sign for improved ability
to understand Indiana’s internship world in the future.

Furthermore, including certain identifying information about interns to the central
system would enable the use of longitudinal data systems (IWIS) to study actual Indiana
employment outcomes following internships. This sort of feedback on the impact of
internships could significantly enhance understanding of their role in retaining talent
and improving Indiana’s human capital.

INTERNnet should pursue development of an information system capable of efficiently
gathering and managing such data to support needed analysis and monitoring over
time, along with a plan to encourage schools and employers to participate.

**Summary**

In conclusion, internships meaningfully improve students’ prospects for employment and
they increase the odds that graduates will remain in Indiana. Indiana INTERNnet
provides meaningful support toward these goals. Actions recommended to further
strengthen these outcomes of Indiana internships include:

- Help establish and support regional initiatives linking schools and employers,
  promoting internships as a key tool to build a stronger regional economy.
- Partner with industry associations serving Indiana’s targeted industry sectors.
- Expand summer housing opportunities to make it easier for students to take
  internships away from home.
- Review, update and improve the guidance materials INTERNnet provides for
  employers.
- Build on the value smaller employers and schools find in INTERNnet’s services.
- Enable employers to post an internship once and have it forwarded
  automatically to multiple colleges’ websites.
- Explore certifying high-quality internships.
- Pursue development of a statewide internship information system to provide
  feedback on internship outcomes to schools and employers.