

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
BOARD RULE 400.0100.00
NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENGAGED IN INTERNSHIPS AND CO-OPS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING: JULY 22, 2010

Belmont Technical College students engage in a number of internship, practicum and co-op experiences during their programs of study. These experiences may be paid or unpaid opportunities. Internships, practicums and co-ops provide the chance for students to participate in real-world work situations as they apply their skills and abilities to the business environment. These experiences also provide employers with an opportunity to evaluate the skill level of students, and perhaps make a decision to hire them after graduation. In addition, through partnerships with business and industry, practicums provide a way for program chairs and faculty to evaluate the currency and relevancy of their curricula. Internships also provide a means for the assessment of student learning outcomes at the end of the program.

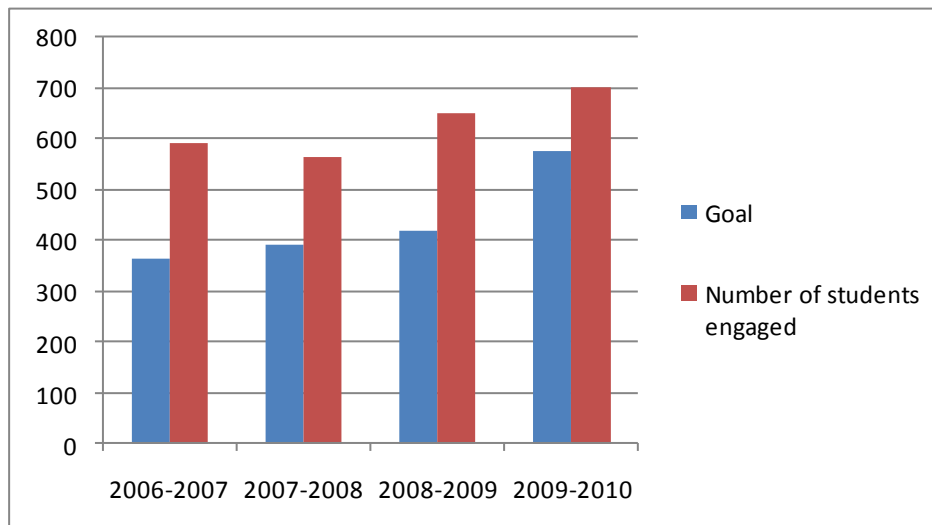
Data

Over the past four years, Belmont Technical College students have participated in a number of internship, practicum and co-op experiences. Table 1, *Number of students participating in internships, co-ops and practicums 2006 to 2010* shows the academic year, the goal set by the College and reported to the University System of Ohio, and the number of students participating in this type of learning experiences. Chart 1 displays the same data in a bar chart. In the chart, blue bars on the left in each pairing represent the goal, and red bars on the right represent the actual numbers.

Table 1, *Number of students participating in internships, co-ops and practicums 2006 to 2010*

Academic year	Goal	Number of students engaged
2006-2007	364	593
2007-2008	391	564
2008-2009	417	650
2009-2010	575	702

Chart 1, *Number of students participating in internships, co-ops and practicums 2006 to 2010*



Analysis

Belmont continues to work toward increasing the number of students who are participating in internships and co-op experiences. The actual number of student participating has exceeded the goal in each of the last four years. Goals were initially set in 2008 and revised in 2009. For the academic year 2009-2010, the goal was set at 575 students and the actual number was 702. Goals are revised each year and submitted to the Higher Education Information System (HEI). The goal for 2010-2011 is to have 545 students participating in internships, practicums, and co-ops.

Program chairs and faculty are continuing to pursue a greater number of internships in areas such as business, information technology, and accounting. Many businesses are primarily interested in reducing costs so are eager to take interns. Timing of the internships is dependent on tax season and end of year accounting work for the accounting programs. These experiences are paid internships. While internship arrangements can be beneficial both to the college students and to the businesses, this is only the case when internships are properly monitored. Security requirements in information technology companies sometimes preclude employers from taking students into their businesses. Another challenge in the criminal justice program of late has been the refusal of many law enforcement agencies to allow students under the age of 21 years old to participate in practicums. This is due to liability issues when working with minors in the criminal justice system.

Some internships are not accounted for in the numbers gathered by the USO through HEI. In order to be counted as participating in these experiences, students must be enrolled in credit bearing courses. However, some Belmont students may be working casually in the mining or electronic industries, but are not enrolled in credit bearing internships or co-ops. These students have acquired the positions with these companies such as Consol Coal or American Electric Power (AEP) through their association with Belmont's Electronics, Power Plant or Civil Engineering programs. Students are actively recruited by these companies due to their knowledge of the industry acquired through their course work at Belmont. When attempts have been made to formalize these work experiences through offering college credit, the employers are not interested in completing evaluation forms or working with faculty to award credit. Therefore, the tracking mechanism needed to validate these experiences is not currently in place. In addition, in the industrial trades program area, students have been enrolled in welding classes and worked as lab aids through the college's work study program. These students are not captured in the co-op numbers either.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Belmont is making steady progress in meeting the college and USO metrics for internships and co-op experiences. The future may hold additional challenges however. The ability to secure clinical sites for the health care programs continues to be very competitive due the number of programs that are vying for the same clinical sites in the tri-state area. Sustaining important relationships with health care agencies as well as forming new relationships will be paramount to securing these practicum sites. Law enforcement agency regulations may preclude the participation of younger students in the criminal justice program. This may necessitate the creation of an alternate experience for this group of students. In the industrial trades programs seeking out new practicum and internships opportunities for students is a goal for the next year. Belmont already has a strong relationship with some local companies in the welding and heating, ventilation and air conditioning industry (HVAC) so this goal is achievable.

The Building Preservation and Restoration (BPR) program continues to provide unique and challenging opportunities for students to become involved in the restoration business and is an exemplar of best practices. Students receive college credit while learning about the nuances of restoring national monuments and historical sites. They also develop relationships with potential employers in their field of study. Using this program as a model may assist in the formation of additional business relationships in all programs at Belmont.

Looking ahead to the semester conversion process, curriculum revision will provide an opportunity for all Belmont programs to consider the addition of a practicum or internship experience. An effort will be made to secure college credit for these experiences so that the HEI system of Ohio will reflect students' participation in these opportunities.