

# Carleton Externships

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As a proud liberal arts college, Carleton believes in encouraging students to explore. This has long been true in our curriculum and is now increasingly true off campus as well—thanks in large part to externships. “Externships are extremely important for Carleton students,” says Parents Advisory Council (PAC) co-chair Laird McCulloch P’12, P’15. “Carleton students are liberal arts majors, and they have a great breadth of knowledge but do not have as much practical experience. At a very low cost to everybody, externships give great insight into ways certain parts of the real world function.”

## What are externships?

Externships are short-term opportunities for students to explore a career in a hands-on fashion. Externs spend one to three weeks, usually over winter break, with an organization learning everything they can, and, depending on the externship, sometimes completing a small project.

## Are they like job shadowing? Or internships?

Somewhere in between. Externships demand more engagement than job shadowing, with externs actively asking questions and shaping what they will see and learn. They’re also shorter than internships and focus more on breadth—getting a wide overview of an industry or organization—rather than depth.

## Who participates in externships?

Freshman and sophomores are prime candidates for externships, but all students are welcome to apply. Strengthening the college’s externship program has become a major initiative in recent years, in response to high student demand. In fact, during winter break in the 2015–2016 school year, the Career Center hopes to offer 150 externships, up 500% from just 30 two years prior.

## How do students benefit from externships?

On top of the knowledge and experience students gain, they also get a head start thinking about life after Carleton. In order to apply, students learn how to submit a résumé, cover letter, and budget. As a result of an externship, students gain professional networks and position themselves well for future job opportunities.

## How can alumni and parents help?

Serving as an externship host is an excellent way to get involved, as is providing housing for students completing externships, and providing funds to cover costs is also important. Students try to keep living expenses low by staying with their hosts, family, or other network connections if possible. However, a lack of housing options or insufficient funds to cover travel costs can make some externships too expensive for many students. To ensure all our students have equal chances at exploring their career options, Carleton needs to be able to provide airfare assistance. A gift for externships brings the liberal arts philosophy of exploration into an even broader scope.

“For many students, externships are life-changing,” McCulloch said. “The fact that we could do 100 was great, but we need to do more because so many students were turned away last year.”



# Externship Profile:

Vicky Wu '17, extern with NSW Corp. in Portland, OR



Vicky Wu '17 set off for her externship with high hopes but few preconceptions. She knew externing at NSW Corp. in Portland, Ore., with Carleton parent Laird McCulloch P'12, P'15 and Kyle Raines would teach her about real estate investments. She hoped it might give her food for thought about a career path. And she assumed, like many do, it resembled job shadowing—simply observing professionals going about their days.

She was wrong.

"With a job shadow, you follow someone around and see what they would do in a normal day. Externships are more about active learning," Vicky says. "Laird and Kyle definitely changed their schedule for me, so I could see anything I wanted to about their jobs. Every day they asked me, 'What do you want to learn today?'"

Her externship proved to be a crash course in both real estate and finance. In just ten days, she saw how her hosts manage both property and investments, heard their expert insights on what makes for good investments, and learned about finance, cash flow, and marketing. McCulloch and Raines drove her around

Portland, took her out to dinners, and arranged informational interviews for her with bankers, lawyers, real estate agents, architects, and contractors.

This broad spectrum of activities was extremely beneficial to Wu as a sophomore just beginning to consider her options. She was able to see the company—and industry—from a wide perspective, understanding how all parts work together and everything her hosts could potentially be doing on any given day. In contrast, an internship is usually more targeted and helps a student hone a particular skill set; its focus is depth, not breadth.

Wu feels her externship had multiple advantages. For one, it was short. She was able to complete her externship over winter break, with time to spare. For another, it was all about learning and exploring. While internships are very job-focused, externships might only include small, concrete projects—for example, Wu completed a project on social media as part of her externship for NSW.

And not only did she learn about careers, Wu says she refined her own goals. Soon after her externship, she declared a major in economics and decided she will probably remain in the United States rather than return home to China.

Wu encourages her fellow students to apply for externships, too, and hopes to offer externship opportunities to future students when she becomes an alumna.

"My externship was just amazing," she says. "It might sound exaggerated, but I would like to think that this experience really changed my life."



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