

INTERNSHIP PARTICIPATION: EXPLORING EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS DIFFERENCES IN TRADITIONAL FRESHMEN AND TRANSFER STUDENTS CLASS of 2020

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the current report is to examine internship participation and employment success of Spring 2020 graduating seniors with consideration given to differences between traditional freshmen and transfer students.

This brief report is organized into three sections:

- 1) Internship participation: employment success rates at graduation and 6 months post
- 2) Internship site job offers, acceptance rates, and self-reported internship quality
- 3) Internships as peak learning experience

This report includes data from **Spring 2020 graduating seniors who indicated that they were **seeking employment** (i.e., seniors who indicated they were seeking education or had other post-graduation plans were excluded).*

(I) INTERNSHIP PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

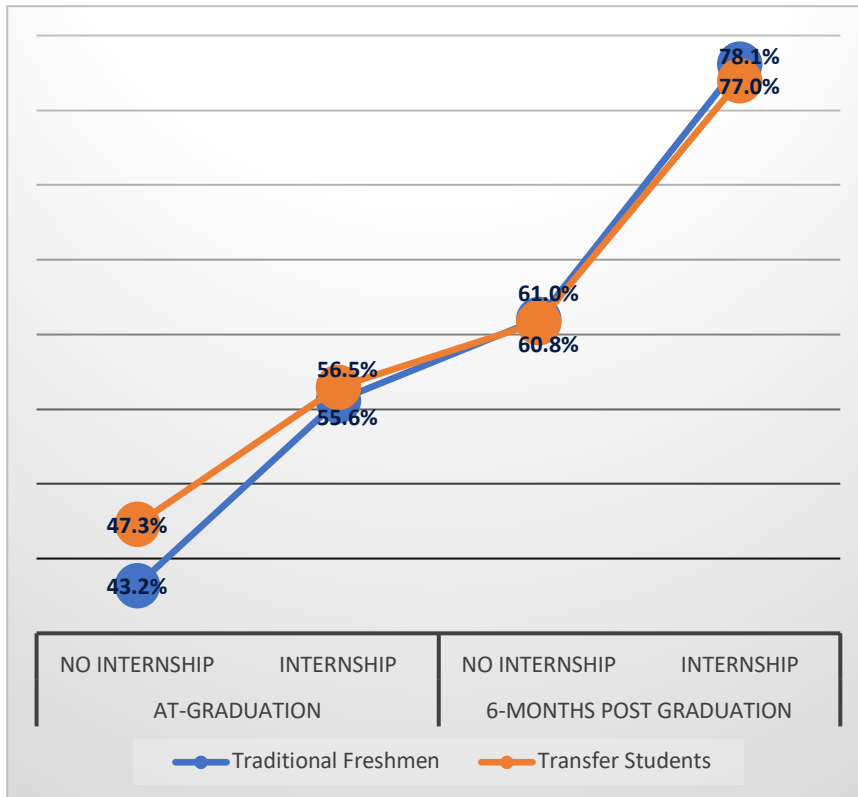
Internship participation		
	N	%
All Seeking Employment	1239	60.2%
Traditional Freshmen	1025	63.3%
Transfer Students	209	52.9%



At the time of graduation, about half of the graduates seeking employment had successfully obtained a job. Nearly three-quarters of Auburn University graduates were employed just 6-months later. Internships may support student success: graduates participating in an internship were 13% more likely to be employed at the time of graduation.

Employment Success Rates				
		All	Traditional Freshmen	Transfer Students
At Graduation	No Internship	42.8%	43.2%	47.3%
	Internship	55.7%	55.6%	56.5%
	Overall	50.6%	51.1%	52.2%
6 Months Post Graduation	No Internship	62.4%	61.0%	60.8%
	Internship	80.2%	78.1%	77.0%
	Overall	73.1%	74.9%	71.4%

TRADITIONAL FRESHMEN VS TRANSFER STUDENTS



The figure to the left illustrates student success improvement in the six months following graduation AND that students participating in internships experience greater success at both time points. This remained true even when graduating seniors were divided into two groups based on their status as a traditional freshmen entry or transfer student.

Interestingly, transfer students generally experienced greater success at the time of graduation, especially in students not completing internships (~4%). Ultimately, transfer students are outpaced by traditional freshmen students in the six months following graduation. Whereas traditional freshmen show an increase in success by 24%, transfer students show an increase in success by just 19%, regardless of participation in internships.

Internship participation did not seem to play a role in differences at graduation (i.e., transfer students outperformed traditional freshmen regardless of internship participation). 6 months post-graduation, differences in the opposite direction are slightly greater for students that have participated in an internship. However, it is hard to determine the significance of this difference given the internship participation rate is much lower for transfer students (52.9% vs. 63.3%).

(2) INTERNSHIP SITE JOB OFFERS

60.2% of graduating seniors seeking employment completed an internship during their time at Auburn. 37% of those participating received a job offer from the internship site, and 53.6% of those offered accepted the job.

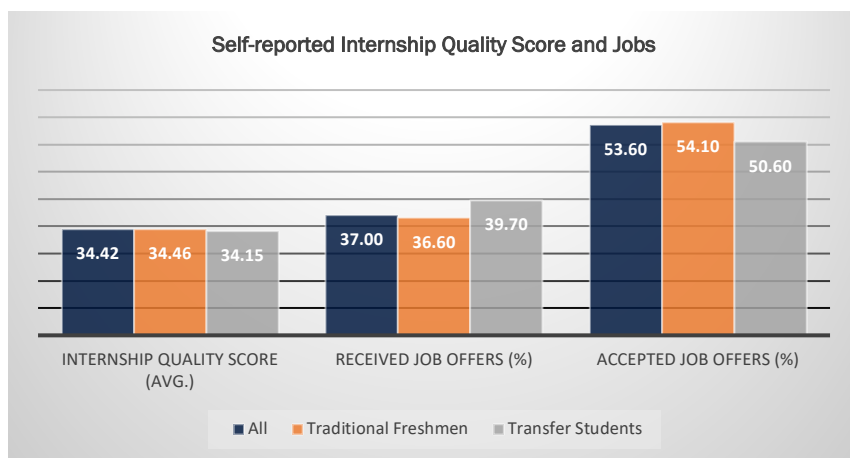
	Jobs resulting from internships		
	All	Traditional Freshmen	Transfer Students
Received Job Offer at Internship Site	37.0%	36.6%	39.7%
Accepted Job Offer at Internship Site	53.6% (19.9%)	54.1% (19.8%)	50.6% (20.1%)

Note: Percentage in parentheses represents the percentage of jobs obtained as a direct result of accepting a job offer at internship site.

Overall, internship participation resulted in employment of 19.9% of graduating seniors who completed an internship. Transfer students seeking employment were less likely to participate in an internship, more likely to receive a job offer from the internship site, and less likely to accept the offer.

To put this all into perspective, 2059 graduating seniors were seeking employment at the time of graduation, of which 1042 reported successful employment. 247 graduating seniors indicated having accepted a job offer from their internship site. Therefore, 24% of jobs obtained at the time of graduation can be directly attributed to internship participation.

SELF-REPORTED INTERNSHIP QUALITY AND JOB OFFERS



During the Campus Engagement and Experience Survey (CEES), students are asked to rate the quality of their internship experience across eight questions. Generally, students perceive their experiences to be very high quality ($M_{quality_score} = 34.4$, $Max_{quality_score} = 40$). Transfer students reported slightly lower quality internship experiences than traditional freshmen. Those who reported above average quality were more likely to report being offered a job from the internship site, accepting the

offer, and being employed at graduation in general. It was hypothesized that internship quality might have been impacted by whether students received a job offer. The correlation between internship quality rating and receiving a job offer was small but statistically significant, $r = .145$, $p < .001$.

(3) PEAK LEARNING EXPERIENCE

During the CEES students are asked to describe their peak learning experience, a transformative learning experience that was both memorable and meaningful. 20.5% of students who participated in an internship listed it as their peak learning experience. In addition, the correlation between Internship Quality and describing internship as the peak learning experience was weak but significant, $r = .11$, $p < .001$.

There were three major themes students emphasized when listing internship as their peak learning moment, listed below with examples:

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE (18%)

“An experience that was transformative for me has been this semester at my internship site. Were it not for a hands-on experience such as my internship, I would not have learned what kind of environment I want to work in and what kind of people that I want to work with. Before my internship, I was not completely sure what I wanted in terms of work environment, so that was a beneficial learning experience for me.”

FINDING CAREER DIRECTION (15%)

“My internship was a very transformative learning experience. It was a wonderful opportunity to wrap up my time at Auburn University and I was able to see all that I had learned at Auburn. I have often wondered if I chose the right major for myself, but after my internship, I know that I chose a career I will enjoy. Even though I may have struggled in classes at times, I left my internship confident in everything I learned in my classes and know that Auburn prepared me to enter the workforce.”

“I think being forced to complete an internship in order to graduate is one of the most beneficial things this university has ever done for me. I think it gives a lot of direction when deciding if a major is right for you and what direction you want to take your post graduate career. I think that multiple internships should be required because if it wasn't for my PR internship, I wouldn't have realized that I didn't want to pursue a career in PR and wanted to switch to something broader, which is why I changed my major to COMM. This allowed me to get an internship in a more corporate setting doing sales, which I loved.”

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS APPLICATION (13%)

“For me, transformative learning experience was my internship after junior year. It let me apply skills and knowledge from my major in the workplace and see the impact that I truly can have. It has definitely made me more competitive in the job market.”

“I had the most transformative experience during my internship - I had to apply all of the knowledge I obtained at Auburn up until that point to work in a competitive environment with some very intelligent students from all over the US.”