

INTERNSHIP PARTICIPATION: EXPLORING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS CLASS OF 2020

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PURPOSE

While examining the at-graduation employment success rates of several student sub-groups by internship participation, we noticed a large difference in success rates between males and females. The purpose of the current report is to further investigate the observed gender differences and to identify ways to narrow the success gap.

INTERNSHIP AND SUCCESS

Self-reported data from the Fall 2019 (N = 1258) and Spring 2020 (N=3184) graduates (approximately 97% of all graduates in those cohorts) was examined. 2863 of these students indicated they were seeking employment. Of the 2863 students seeking employment at graduation, 1519 reported that they had secured employment (**53.1%**), whereas 1344 students indicated they were still seeking employment. There is a large increase in employment success rate for students participating in internship (~12%).

EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS RATES AT GRADUATION	
Internship (N = 1713)	57.97%
No Internship (N = 1150)	45.74%
Overall (N = 2863)	53.06%

The table below illustrates the at-graduation success rates of several sub-groups of students by internship participation.

	MALE — FEMALE	FIRST GEN — NOT FIRST GEN	WHITE — NON-WHITE	TRANSFER — FRESHMEN
Internship (N=1713)	66.82% (586/877)	57.74% (138/239)	58.89% (871/1479)	60.54% (201/332)
	48.68% (407/836)	58.01% (855/1474)	53.95% (116/215)	57.37% (786/1370)
No Internship (N=1150)	48.98% (359/733)	45.75% (97/212)	49.35% (453/918)	50.34% (148/294)
	40.05% (167/417)	45.74% (429/938)	35.98% (59/164)	45.78% (369/806)

Note. GPA, ACT, Female %, First Gen%, White%, and Transfer% are broadly representative of Auburn University graduates. Non-White group consists of American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Isl., Hispanic, Asian, Black or African-American, Two or More Races, and Unknown; non-resident aliens excluded.

Internship participation appears to be much more impactful for males than females seeking employment.

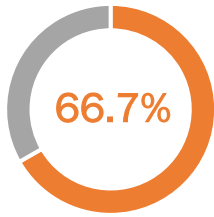
Additionally, despite the positive effect of internship participation, the at-graduation employment success rate for females who participated in an internship is still lower than 50%.

The gender differences in the effect of internship on employment are evident even 6-months post-graduation.

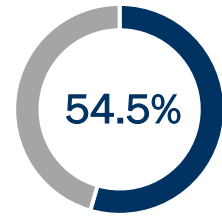
	AT-GRADUATION SUCCESS	SIX-MONTHS POST-GRADUATION SUCCESS
	MALE — FEMALE	MALE — FEMALE
Internship (N ₁ =1713; N ₂ =1789)	66.82% (586/877)	85.14% (779/915)
	48.68% (407/836)	77.57% (678/874)
No Internship (N ₁ =1150; N ₂ =1205)	48.98% (359/733)	67.72% (516/762)
	40.05% (167/417)	61.40% (272/443)

INTERNSHIP PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

We suspected that female students participate in internships less frequently than male students, but found the opposite:



- Out of 1253 female students seeking employment, 836 (66.7%) of them participated in an internship.
- Out of 1610 male students seeking employment, 877 (54.5%) of them participated in an internship.



Despite participating in internships at a higher rate than males, female students were not as successful at securing employment at graduation. Thus, internship participation rates do not seem to be an issue behind the gender differences. To better our understanding of the issue, the rest of the report will focus on the female students who participated in an internship.

FEMALE STUDENTS – INTERNSHIP AND SUCCESS

Out of 836 female students who participated in an internship, only 407 (48.7%) were successful at securing employment at graduation. When examining employment success rates by college, 5 colleges emerged with rates lower than 50% (i.e., more female internship participants that were non-successful than successful at securing employment at graduation):

- AG (36%; 9/25)
- AR (37.7%; 23/61)
- ED (39.5%; 51/129)
- HS (32.8%; 42/128)
- LA (37.9%; 75/198)

Further investigation showed that the deflated rates of employment success among female students in the colleges of AG and AR were a direct result of a small number of female students in those colleges. On the other hand, colleges of ED, HS, and LA have a lot more female internship participants and are female-dominated colleges. However, given that the College of Education (ED) has a unique teaching internship system, we will mainly focus on the College of Human Sciences (HS) and the College of Liberal Arts (LA).

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES (HS)

The College of Human Sciences had 128 female students that participated in an internship. 86 (67.2%) of them did NOT successfully secure an employment at graduation.

We then examined majors of those 86 students:

- Apparel Mchd-Apparels (APME) – 27
- Human Dev & Family Studies (HDFS) – 22
- Global Studies in Human Sciences (GSHS) – 11
- Apparel Mchd-Prod Des and Mngt (APDP) – 9
- Hospitality Management - Event Management Option (EVMT) – 8
- Interior Design (INDS) – 6
- Hotel & Restaurant Management (HRMT) – 2
- Nutrition, Wellness Option (NTWE) – 1

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS (LA)

The College of Liberal Arts had 198 female students that participated in an internship. 123 (62.1%) of them did NOT successfully secure an employment at graduation.

We then examined majors of those 123 students:

- Public Relations Communication (PRCM) – 37
- Communication (COMM) – 22
- Social Work (SOWO) – 11
- Journalism (JRNL) – 7
- Psychology (PSYC) – 7
- Health Services Administration (HADM) – 6
- Media Studies (MDIA) – 6
- Political Science (POLI) – 5
- English-Literature (EGLL) – 3
- Economics, Liberal Arts (ECNL) – 2
- English-Creative Writing (EGLC) – 2
- Media Studies, Visual Media Option (MDIV) – 2
- OTHER – 13

NEXT STEPS

We recognize that many uncontrollable external factors such as job demand have a tremendous impact on employment success. However, the discrepancy between students' indicated goals (i.e., securing employment) and placement within certain colleges and majors should not go unaddressed.

Colleges of Human Sciences and Liberal Arts should provide a better guidance to students based on their goals and interests. Even if internships are not a required part of the major curriculum, the colleges should take the initiative in securing their students internships at competitive organizations, which will more likely result in employment. This impact was previously demonstrated in research at Auburn University showing that 24% of jobs obtained at graduation were a direct result of internships. The first step for these colleges might be to better utilize various university resources such as the University Career Center.

Male-dominated colleges and majors that are very successful in placing students that participated in internships should continue in their efforts to recruit more female students. For a summary of relevant research and efforts to recruit women into STEM fields, see [Society of Women Engineers' Annual Review](#). Additionally, less successful colleges and majors might be able to adopt some practices from more successful colleges and majors (in securing competitive internships).

Colleges and majors with the highest employment success rates among all students (male and female) that participated in internships:

- College of Engineering (EN) – 78.5%
 - Software Engineering (SWEN) – 88.9%
 - Civil Engineering (CIVL) – 79.5%
- College of Agriculture (AG) – 64.8%
 - Horticulture Undergraduate (HRTB) – 81.8%
 - Agricultural Business & Econ (AGEC) – 75%
- College of Architecture (AR) – 63.9%
 - Building Science (BSCI) – 97.7%
- College of Business (BU) – 63.2%
 - Accountancy (ACCT) – 75.5%
 - Supply Chain Management (SCMN) – 71.2%