Comenius Scholars: A Non-Profit Internship Course for Liberal Arts Students

by Kurt C. Schaefer

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Comenius Scholars: A Non-Profit Internship Course for Liberal Arts Students

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Kurt C. Schaefer
Professor and chair, Department of Economics, Calvin College
3201 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI, 49546
616-526-6298, schk@calvin.edu

Introduction

This paper falls under the conference rubric of a curricular innovation that intends to build the relationship between liberal arts education and the social good.

Nearly a decade ago, Calvin College successfully sought external grant funding for a new venture that we came to call the Comenius Scholars program. The program created paid internships in non-profit organizations for liberal-arts students, accompanied by a seminar course that aims to be a “mini-nonprofit-MBA” for the interns. The program also incorporates site visits by the faculty seminar leader, with ongoing evaluation of the quality of the internships and performance of the interns.

This paper by the program’s grant proposal co-author and initial director narrates our experience with this program—its initial motivation and governing concepts, the grant-seeking process, the nature of the curriculum, and our overall evaluation of the program as a curricular venture for the social good.

I have emphasized the practical “how-to” realities of initiating and running such a program, in the hope that this will leave those who find it attractive in a better position to replicate it.
**Motivation and First Principles**

This program came into existence because a sharp grant officer of the college recognized an opportunity. The President’s Cabinet had, in 2003, identified as a strategic goal the creation of some sort of internship program for liberal arts students. Many non-profits were approaching the College with internship opportunities, spanning a range of international development, health, government, education, justice, environmental, advocacy, performing arts, disability rights, mental health, neighborhood association, and museum/performing arts interests. They sought interns for (in descending order of frequency) services to clients, marketing, administration, technology, event planning, public relations and writing, research, fund raising, strategy/business planning, and exhibition curation, often requesting multiple competencies for each placement. But 80% of non-profit internship offerings at our Career Services office were going unfilled. This was partly because most of our liberal arts departments had not developed the supervised internship programs that most of our professional programs offered, and partly because nearly all the internship opportunities were volunteer positions. Yet we received consistent feedback from our liberal arts graduates that college internships had been—or would have been—crucial to their transition from college to vocation. And we believed that a program like this would help nervous parents relax about the financial implications of being a liberal arts major.

As our eventual grant proposal put it, “The College’s natural strength—its core commitment to the liberal arts—offers only a tiny, random connection between liberal arts majors and mentoring internships, and our community’s natural strength—its exceptional depth and diversity of non-profit ventures—is the obvious choice for pursuing such mentoring.”

The grant officer, Lois Konyndyk, viewed this situation as an opportunity. The College had a good relationship with a grant-making foundation that aims to “stimulate excellence in private liberal arts education.” The foundation had previously funded a College program for undergraduate research with faculty mentor-colleagues. The foundation had a program of three-year, $250,000 grants.

Our first paragraph introduced our program as one that “will… give our liberal arts students experiential learning in the non-profit work environment, (and) highlight the exceptional value liberally
educated students bring to the community…nurture(ing) students’ sense of civic responsibility through leadership building and experiential learning.” So from the beginning we conceived of the program as both the “lab” course that liberal arts students lacked, and a vehicle for the social good. “The combination of experiential learning with leadership training will develop students with insights into the operational needs of nonprofit agencies, provide service to the community informed by liberal arts thinking, and offer opportunities for non-profit leaders to hone the skills they need for effective leadership.”

Lois approached me, asking if I were willing to co-author the grant proposal and direct the program. I was directing our college Center for Social Research, had taught economics primarily to business students for 25 years, had supervised a number of internships, and was responsible for management of two non-profit organizations. I have included as Appendix One an extended job description for the program director.

The Grant and Financial Sustainability

Why the name “Comenius Scholars?” Initially there were suggestions of names like “the non-profit internship seminar program.” But we wanted a brand name to give the participants a sense of identity, camaraderie, and presence on campus. Jan Comenius was a seventeenth-century Czech teacher, scientist, writer, and education reformer, one of the earliest champions of universal education, and the initiator of lasting innovations in liberal arts education. He was invited to completely reform Sweden’s educational system and, four successful years later, England’s. Ultimately he was invited to become President of Harvard University. Comenius argued, against late-Medieval practice, that the knowledge of words should not precede but be correlative with the teaching of things; he represents the values and commitments that gave rise to our proposal and, in our view, the best virtues and outcomes of liberal arts education.

We emphasized the apprenticeship elements of the program—deliberate goal-setting, accountability, mentoring, and an ongoing for-credit seminar that non-profit partners may also attend—a “non-profit MBA boot camp” that addressed organizational leadership, strategic planning, resource management, marketing, communication, internal systems, grant writing, volunteer coordination, working with boards, and private-sector partnerships. We required that the internships be paid, and from the beginning required that internship
sites paid 25% of the student wages—both to begin building financial sustainability into the program, and to ensure that internship sites had an incentive to create and maintain meaningful, well-supervised positions for the interns.

From the college’s perspective, the program offered economies of scope across liberal arts departments—economies that are common in large, professionally-oriented majors. We anticipated the emergence of small, costly, department-level internship programs with multiplied costs of administration, finance, internship marketing, and creating visibility for students’ skills. We included in our planning, and in our faculty advisory committee, liberal arts colleagues who had offered internship oversight on an ad hoc basis for their students and were glad to see the administrative workload taken up by others. The program also offered an economy in administration in that 7% of federal work-study funds are designated for employment at non-profit community organizations; we re-organized those positions into Comenius internships, streamlining the administration of our work-study program while supporting Comenius’ financial sustainability. We also encouraged employers to include in internships some activity to expand their funding base, so the Comenius positions could gradually become financially self-sustaining.

These measures, aimed at long-term financial sustainability, allowed us to stretch the organization’s usual three-year grant into a four-year grant, which gave us more breathing room to pursue sustainability.

Most of the grant funds went toward subsidizing the wages of the interns. Grant funds also provided college budget relief by covering 20% of two career-development salaries. There were also line items for seminar expenses and honoraria, honoraria for several faculty who helped plan the curriculum, and overtime honorarium for the program director. To conserve expenses, I taught one section of the course each semester, receiving overtime compensation equivalent to a single overtime course.

Our development timeline included

- curriculum planning (with a faculty team), development of relationships with non-profit organizations, and external publicity (all during the summer of 2006),
more publicity (to non-profits and liberal arts departments), designing evaluation instruments, selecting the first class of students, and developing the seminar curriculum with non-profit leaders in the fall,

- making the first student placements in January, and
- launching the program in February.

Evaluation of the student work included employer evaluations, both on paper and in a term-end personal interview (with the student, program director, and a professional from our Career Services office). We also included program- and self-evaluations by the students.

We hosted an on-campus reception at the end of each term, with refreshments, a poster display prepared by each student concerning their term’s work, and brief presentations by a student and an employer.

The Curriculum: Seminars, Internships, Events

We enrolled about 25 students each term, receiving applications (hosted online at the Career Services website) and conduction selection interviews several months before each term began. We required a minimum 3.0 GPA, with preference to junior/senior standing. Selected students were required to complete a one-hour workshop on resume writing and interviewing before applying to internship sites and interviewing with them. Posting to an internship position was by mutual agreement between the student and employer. On-campus positions were not eligible for the program.

I have included as Appendix Two a model course syllabus. The interns and program director met weekly for the ninety-minute seminar. In addition to course readings, some short lectures, and group conversations about the emerging internships, we communally did several self-exploration activities: Everyone completed the StrengthsFinder assessment early in the term, and used it to discuss fine-tuning of the internship with the supervisor. Each of us also completed an online training exercise hosted by a major consulting firm, to explore each intern’s instincts about how they were approaching their work.
Interns normally served their organizations about ten hours each week, with a minimum stipend of $500. The director checked in with supervisors by phone about one month into the term, to make sure that all was well. Though supervisors were welcomed to take part in the on-campus seminar, this rarely happened. We had at least one “field trip” seminar each term to a non-profit, to discuss with its director some element of the syllabus for which this non-profit was particularly well-regarded. The director and a Career Services professional made a site visit to each employer in the last three weeks of the term, conducting evaluations as part of that visit. And during the last week of the term we hosted the reception for interns and supervisors in a large reception room on campus.

*Comenius for the Social Good*

Our assessments of the role of the program, both for the students and for the organizations, have been very positive. Perhaps the strongest endorsement has been the sustained interest of organizations in hiring our interns. I have included, as Appendix Three, one example of the evaluative term-end essays that students submit as a part of their Comenius seminar.
Appendix One

Job Description: Comenius Scholars Program Director

April 2009

Kurt Schaefer

Essential duties:

1. Advertise the program to prospective students each term (shared with Career Development office); generally promote the program among College colleagues

2. Participate with Career Development in the student interviews through which successful applicants are chosen; with Career Development, select successful applicants. (This is currently three one-hour meetings per term.)

3. Hire and supervise a student assistant, if desired.

4. Plan the on-campus seminar: Recruit guest speakers, arrange for their honoraria, plan field trips if desired, select curriculum, organize site visits each term, organize the end-of-term reception (with Career Development), plan course readings and lectures, grade assignments, manage course website, conduct evaluations, adjust course based on evaluations.

5. Teach or lead the on-campus seminar weekly. Assure that students complete the necessary paperwork (with Career Development) with their supervisors. Arrange for faculty mentors for students if desired.

6. Prepare reports for grant funding sources as needed—currently a short annual report in June. Pursue additional grant funding as needed and requested.
Reporting structure:

The director works closely with the Career Development office, and reports to an academic dean.

Supporting documents:

References to the director from the original grant proposal, and the current list of annual duties for the director and Career Development colleagues, are attached below.
From the original grant proposal's timeline: Duties of the Career Development office (CD below) and program director (PD):

**February - May 2007**
- Orient students to seminar series and internship placement expectations (CD)
- Begin internship (students)
- Begin seminar series, eight sessions throughout semester (PD)
- Visit internship sites and gain feedback on students (CD)
- Elicit mid-semester feedback from non-profits (PD, CD)
- Provide opportunities for reflection and feedback from students (PD)
- Provide liaison between courses/departments and students involved in the program to ensure program is serving their needs and connecting to course content (PD, CD)
- Gather materials to help with future promotion of program (PD, CD)
- End semester with appropriate evaluation of program and measurement of outcomes (PD, CD)
  - Students: self evaluation, seminar evaluation, internship site evaluation
  - Non-profits: evaluation of student and program
  - College faculty: evaluation of program impact and suggestions for improvement
  - Career Development: feedback on internship sites and effectiveness of program
- Letters of thanks to non-profits for participating and gain their feedback (CD, PD)

**Summer 2007 (PD, CS, faculty team)**
- Re-organize work-study community service employment into Comenius and departmental internships (PD, CD)
- Assess project (PD)
- Modify project as needed (PD, CD)
- Enhance marketing strategy as needed (CD)
- Assess and improve curriculum and pedagogy (PD)
- Work with non-profits to develop financial steps to sustain the internship position at the end of four year (PD)

**Fall 2007 (and following semesters through spring 2009)**
- Begin implementing project modifications, including involvement of work-study students and offering the seminar series both semesters, which will allow us to increase number of students served

Calvin College

- Continue to refine program to meet needs of liberal arts students, liberal arts departments, and area non-profits...efforts continued throughout course of program
- Work with non-profit and student interns to implement financial steps to improve funding base
- Continue offering Comenius Scholars program each semester
Current table of annual duties for program director and Career Development colleagues:

### Comenius Scholars Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff Responsibility</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and request student email for targeted majors</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>September &amp; January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send email to students from targeted majors</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Mid September &amp; February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send Student News Comenius info</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>October 1 &amp; March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify non-profit employers</td>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>September &amp; January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send Comenius info via email to employers</td>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>October 1 &amp; March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send Comenius Scholar info to Calvin News</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>October 1 &amp; March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print and distribute advising sheet for professors</td>
<td>Laurie or student</td>
<td>October 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send info to Andrea G for her advisees in SAS</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>October 1 &amp; March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remind targeted organizations</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>October 1 &amp; March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present program info to faculty/Calvin interest groups</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>On-going</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Employer Position Listing Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff Responsibility</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review potential Comenius descriptions from employers</td>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspond with employer if questions or changes needed</td>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List accepted positions on Knight Vision</td>
<td>Laurie or student</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save copy of accepted positions in computer</td>
<td>Laurie or student</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student Selection Process

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff Responsibility</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review student applications</td>
<td>Beth, Laurie and Kurt</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate student database</td>
<td>Beth or student</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow registration deadline</td>
<td>Beth, Laurie and Kurt</td>
<td>October 15 &amp; March 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Dates</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule group interview sessions</td>
<td>Beth or student</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct the student group interviews</td>
<td>Beth, Laurie and Kurt</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide students to accept</td>
<td>Beth, Laurie and Kurt</td>
<td>October 20 &amp; April 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise students of selection decisions</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>October 20 &amp; April 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announce selected students to Calvin community</td>
<td>Beth and Laurie</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Student Internship Search**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide student orientation seminar for internship search plan</td>
<td>Beth and Laurie</td>
<td>1st week November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise students to complete the KV Internship Training</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>1st week November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask students to send resume for critique</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>2nd week November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule appointments to meet with students</td>
<td>Beth or student</td>
<td>3rd week November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete student appointments - resume &amp; interview info</td>
<td>Beth and Laurie</td>
<td>4th week November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track the students progress on database</td>
<td>Beth or student</td>
<td>On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send reminders for completion of above steps</td>
<td>Beth or student</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request update related to student search</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
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</table>

**Employment Pay Process**

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Send e-card to Student Employment for internship pay</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for tax forms needed via Student Employment</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct International students to obtain CPT work visa</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise students to complete tax forms</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure Comenius employer internship agreement</td>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform employers of pay process</td>
<td>Laurie</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask students to pick up time sheets, if starting early</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>January &amp; August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request employer invoice for payment via Finance Office</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
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**Other Processes**

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advise Registrar's office of student names &amp; ID for registration</td>
<td>Beth or student</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Faculty/Staff Responsibility</td>
<td>Time Frame</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure students are registered for IDIS 385</td>
<td>Beth or student</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform Financial Aid of student info for Work Study</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>November &amp; April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List student assistant position with JobShop</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview and hire student assistant</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Career Development students to assist</td>
<td>Beth and Laurie</td>
<td>September</td>
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**Comenius Scholars Process**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Faculty/Staff Responsibility</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty/Staff Responsibility</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Course Preparation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicit suggestions for course speakers</td>
<td>Kurt (help from Laurie &amp; Beth)</td>
<td>July &amp; December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact potential course speakers</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>July &amp; December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange speaker travel and supply directions</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>August &amp; January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit honorarium request for speakers</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>September &amp; February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan course syllabus</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>August &amp; January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine reading assignments</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>August &amp; January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare reflective journal topics</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>August &amp; January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course Activity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advise interns to complete goal sheet with supervisor</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>September &amp; February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask students for nominations for faculty mentor if desired</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>September &amp; February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicit faculty mentors based on nominations if desired</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>September &amp; February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide faculty info to Provost office for faculty payments if desired</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct interns to finalize goal sheet with supervisor</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
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</table>

**Evaluation**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare employer visit materials</td>
<td>Laurie and Kurt</td>
<td>September &amp; February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule employer site visits</td>
<td>Kurt, Laurie or student</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete employer site visits</td>
<td>Kurt, Laurie (or Beth)</td>
<td>October &amp; March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine course evaluation questions and methods</td>
<td>Kurt (help from Laurie &amp; Beth)</td>
<td>January &amp; August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare evaluation documents</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>January &amp; August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey interns related to internship employer value</td>
<td>Beth and Laurie</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send employer thank you with request for program comments</td>
<td>Kurt, Laurie and Beth</td>
<td>December &amp; May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze evaluation results</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>January &amp; June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend changes based on evaluation analysis</td>
<td>Kurt, Laurie and Beth</td>
<td>January &amp; June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey alumni about the value of the program</td>
<td>Kurt</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare reports for McGregor Foundation annually</td>
<td>Kurt (help from Laurie &amp; Beth)</td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Appendix Two

Sample Syllabus

IDIS 385: Comenius Scholars Internship

Spring 2009 Seminar Syllabus
Wednesday, 4:30-5:50, North Hall 159

Course Overview

This seminar constitutes the on-campus portion of the Comenius Scholars program. The purpose of the program is three-fold: (1) to organize high-quality experiential learning internships for traditional liberal arts students, in which they will refine their abilities to think critically, write clearly, organize effectively, form commitments to service, and use their skills to benefit non-profit organizations, (2) to form long-term, mutually-beneficial partnerships with non-profit organizations, and (3) to highlight for students and civic organizations the value of liberal arts education. The program is led by Professor Kurt Schaefer (who also convenes the seminar) and Beth Cok and Laurie Lemmen of the Calvin Career Development Office.

This seminar course is described in the following way by the Calvin College Catalog:
IDIS 385, Comenius Scholars Internship. (3) F and S. This internship course links liberal arts students to nonprofit apprenticeships in the community. Each internship involves a minimum of ten hours of work per week in a professional setting with an approved employer-supervisor. The academic seminar accompanying the internships involves readings, seminars/workshops, reflective journals, and a major paper/project/presentation. A student may participate for up to two semesters. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing and permission of the internship coordinator.

IDIS 385 is a course in which three dynamic elements converge: gaining apprenticeship experience by working in responsible positions in a professional setting, learning and sharing valuable lessons from the experience in a seminar, and providing value to non-profit community partners.

The course meets on Wednesday afternoons for 80 minutes, beginning at 4:30

Student course objectives

1) Calling: Students will hone their understanding of their vocation through self-assessment, review by supervisors, discussion, and reflection.
2) Collation: Students will integrate the skills and knowledge gained in their majors, core studies, and this internship course.
3) Context: In response to their internship experience and the seminar, students will continue to explore connections between the Christian tradition and their professional development.
4) Competence: The combination of experiential learning with leadership training will develop insights into the operational needs of nonprofit agencies, provide service to the community informed by liberal arts thinking, and offer opportunities for non-profit leaders to hone the skills they need for effective leadership.

Course Strategies

1) Work: Students will gain practical experience in an apprenticeship with deliberate goal setting, accountability, and mentoring. Interns work a minimum of ten hours per week, in addition to the time spent working on the internship seminar.

2) Study: The internship seminar meets weekly for 80 minutes. Students will share their experiences and reflect upon the experiences of other students in small groups, discussions and in workshop settings in class. The seminar will include college-level education in nonprofit leadership and management. (See the schedule of topics below.) The seminar will also survey the large network of non-profit organizations in the area and the scope of their work in strengthening our communities.

3) Reflection: Students will critically evaluate their experiences and personal formation through journaling, in-class evaluation instruments, a written essay and presentations to their fellow students.

Grading

Grades for the course are determined according to the following rubric:

**Job Performance**  
40%

This portion of the grade will be determined by the work supervisor’s performance review, as evaluated by the professor. Special emphasis will be given to setting realistic and achievable goals during the internship, and evaluating progress on those goals throughout the term. A written instrument is used by students and their job supervisors to set goals, and should be completed during the first week of the term. Grading will be based on the following scale:

10—Outstanding, unusually excellent performance; top 10% of similar employees; far beyond normal expectations.

9—Outstanding work as reported by the supervisor. Expectations were exceeded and defined goals were achieved.

8—Good solid work performance with strong feedback from the supervisor. Expectations were met and goals were achieved.

7—Adequate work performance. Feedback from the supervisor may express some dissatisfaction with the work. Expectations and goals were not all met.

6—Performance on the job generally did not meet the planned objectives. There were missed days at work, and/or goals and expectations were not met.

5 or less—Significant difficulties occurred; the gap between expectations and performance was significant, and reasonable attempts to address the problem by the supervisor were not met with improved performance.
Journals/Seed Questions 25%
Written critical reflection helps students learn much more from their experiences. Seed questions will be used to prepare for discussions of the readings, or to focus journal writing. Journal entry assignments will typically be a minimum of 1 to 2 typed double-spaced 12 pt. font pages. They are generally due at the beginning of the meeting for which they are assigned.
Grading of journals will be based on the following scale:
10—Deep reflection on the issues. Insights were offered that met and exceeded the journal guidelines. Writing demonstrates analytical reflection that pulls together prior course work, seminar readings/discussions, and internship work experience. Entries reflectively incorporate all of the “seed” issues suggested in the assignments.
9—Thoughtful and inquisitive journal entries. All of the listed reflection components are present and analysis is applied effectively. “Seed” issues are included in the reflection.
8—Good, solid journal entries with adequate analysis. Some of the listed elements are present but not all of them. Some “seed” issues are reflected upon but not all.
7—Good entries, but still largely in the reporting stage with less reflection and analysis incorporated. A few components and seed issues are incorporated but more insight and analysis is needed.
6—Reporting is the norm and reflection is scarce. Entries rarely move beyond telling facts and describing events; there is little analysis.
5 or less—Very little reporting or reflection.

Essay 15%
One essay will be assigned: 5 typed double-spaced 12 pt. font pages, summarizing and evaluating the internship experience, with focused attention to at least one of the specific topics studied in the course (fund raising/grant proposal writing, strategic planning, general leadership,… the topics from the course topic outline below). The essay will involve a limited amount of research beyond the course readings.

Presentations 10%
Students will give two 5-7-minute presentations related to internship experiences and topics covered in class.

Attendance/Participation 10%
Students may, with advance notice to the instructor, miss one class session without affecting the course grade. Each additional seminar class missed will lower the total course grade by 1%. High levels of participation are normal and expected for this course, because in similar courses students report that they gain much by listening to other students. It is expected that students will regularly participate at a high level in order to receive a high grade for participation.
Course Materials and Topic Outline

Readings and other seminar-preparation materials for the course will generally be distributed via the seminar’s KnightVision site.

Here is the scheduled course outline:

2/4  Seminar orientation
Beth Cok: *Paperwork and Logistics*
Schaefer: *StrengthsFinder*
Former Comenius Scholars: *Tips*
Request suggestions for faculty mentors
Introduce Performance Review Sheet, KPI template, *Maximizing your internship*

2/11  Workplace orientation, “millennials”
*StrengthsFinder* review
David Smith: *Comenius*
Consulting case study

2/18  Mark Lundell: *Grant proposal writing*

2/25  Student seminar I: Sharing job situations and goals

3/4  Student seminar II: Sharing job situations and goals

3/11  Informal group social event at Schaefer’s; setting direction for closure

3/18  Strategic planning, project management and tactical planning, Part I

3/25  Spring Break

4/1  Rachel Wondergem:
Strategic planning, project management and tactical planning, Part II

4/8  Melanie Bealan: *Marketing/ Telling your organization’s story*

**Field trip:** Baxter Community Center

4/15  No seminar meeting (worksite visits by Schaefer and Lemmen)

4/22  Student seminar I: Last five-minute presentation; progress toward meeting work goals

4/29  Advising Recess. No class meeting

5/6  Last classroom meeting of the term.
Student seminar II: Last five-minute presentation; progress toward meeting work goals

**Closure activities:**
Complete StrengthsFinder evaluation survey
Complete course and internship evaluations
Reprise Values Sort evaluation

5/13  Closing reception with site supervisors and faculty mentors,
Prince Conference Center
Appendix Three

Meaningful Connections: Roosevelt Park Ministries

By Anna Linder, Calvin College Student, December 2014

We engage in our communities with the hope that initial partnerships will result in deep, personal, and lasting relationships. Steve Drewry, the executive director of Roosevelt Park Ministries, shares how a partnership with Calvin has impacted his ministry and personal life. Mr. Drewry praises the twenty Calvin students who worked on their building during StreetFest. He also recalls the translation work done by Annelise VanDyken, a Spanish-speaking Calvin student. Jamie Cheeney, a Calvin senior and business major, assisted with the tax service program at Roosevelt Park. These services are only the surface of the meaningful partnership built between Roosevelt Park and Calvin. When asked about the impact has in the community, Mr. Drewry reveals, “We have been infinitely blessed by the Calvin students who came to us as Community Scholars.”

The program to which he is referring is the Comenius Scholars Program. Calvin students have the opportunity to complete an internship with a non-profit organization in the community. In 2006, Mr. Drewry confided, Roosevelt Park Ministries was struggling financially as a small, grassroots organization. However, Mr. Drewry had an idea: through the Comenius Scholars Program, he would hire a Calvin student to assist with fundraising and keep the organization afloat. The first Calvin intern wrote grants, contributing to the stabilization of the organization. Indeed, Mr. Drewry’s idea was such a success that Roosevelt Park hosted about twelve more Calvin interns over the next eight years.

Operating in a bilingual neighborhood, Roosevelt Park seeks employees who speak Spanish. Mr. Drewry says about Roosevelt Park’s environment, “Our employees are indeed from all over: I'm from Puerto Rico, Vicki is from Grand Rapids, Domingo is from Guatemala, Jennie lived in Argentina, Brigman is from New Hampshire, Isabel is from Mexico, Abbie is from Mexico, and Melinda's parents are from Mexico.” Fortunately for Roosevelt Park, most of the Calvin interns have been Spanish majors who are interested in
not-for-profit organizations. The most recent Calvin interns have been Jessica Koranda, Rachel Adams, and Paola Fuentes, dedicated Spanish students. Mr. Drewry explains that when they were not writing grants or other work, they would answer the front desk phone. He is impressed with their willingness to speak Spanish to callers. Because of the versatility of the interns, “Mine and Debra’s [another staff member] jobs were made so much easier!” Mr. Drewry relates cheerfully. Most of the interns have been eager to join in the Spanish-speaking environment of the office, adding to their understanding of Spanish and establishing personal connections with other Roosevelt Park employees.

Beyond those built in Roosevelt Park’s office, relationships have formed between local organizations. Mr. Drewry has attempted to give his interns the most complete experience with nonprofits possible. A few years ago, Paola, a Calvin intern, expressed interest in seeing how various positions within a non-profit agency functioned. “So we went on a tour of the Grandville neighborhood to see all the other organizations,” Mr. Drewry discloses. They visited the Hispanic Center, an agency that offers academic enrichment to local Latinos. One such program is SOL (Supporting Our Leaders), which provides resources to Latino youth to help them graduate from high school and prepare for college and a career. Intrigued by the program, Mr. Drewry learned more about the Hispanic Center’s vision and environment.

As a result of this partnership, Mr. Drewry found two volunteers for Roosevelt Park’s summer program and, more importantly, established relationships with the employees of neighboring organizations. “I was happy to bring the Calvin students to other organizations because it gave me an excuse to visit my friends!” Mr. Drewry tells me excitedly. The interest of his interns in other organizations opened up a new world of networking to Mr. Drewry. Through these connections, Drewry has been able to prevent the duplication of services in the community, a sometimes inevitable result of the many organizations active in the Grandville area. Even more importantly, Mr. Drewry’s networking has served to break down the barriers of competition. He reflects, “It’s tempting for agencies to become each other’s rivals, or compare services. You know, everyone says, ‘Our way of doing things is better.’ But because we’ve formed personal relationships, we can discuss our different visions and learn from each other.” By sharing visions, ideas, resources and time, the agencies of Grandville can better serve each other.
Beyond simple volunteering, Roosevelt Park’s partnership with Calvin has deepened so that the greater community is affected. By establishing relationships through StreetFest and other service-learning, Roosevelt Park and Calvin have come to appreciate each other’s visions. The Comenius Scholars Program not only allowed Calvin students to gain practical experience and helped Roosevelt Park flourish; it also allowed Roosevelt Park to form bonds with other agencies to better serve the neighborhood.