Grant to Provide Up to 335 Paid Internships to Metro State Students

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If you plan on accepting an unpaid internship in the next few years, Metropolitan State University’s Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES) may be able to pay you for your efforts.

Metro has received $444,429 from Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation & Affiliates’ Career Ready Internship Grant. With this money, ICES will collaborate with businesses and nonprofits to provide Metro juniors and seniors with paid internships. Students across 29 majors are eligible for the grant.

“It is difficult to overstate just how important the Great Lakes Career Ready award is to the university and Metro State students,” said ICES director Greg Mellas, in a press release. “During our initial 2014–2015 award period, many students reported that a paid academic internship had been a game changer for them, altering their career trajectory and opening a new set of opportunities which simply would not have been possible without the funding made available through this award,” he said.

“The way we have written the proposal allows students the most flexibility in searching and securing the internship that meets their personal and educational goals,” said Victor Cole, the academic internships and study abroad adviser in ICES. “All sites, business and nonprofits, that accept a student intern from Metro State and are approved by the assigned faculty are considered,” he said.

Metro was the only state institution in Minnesota to receive this grant.

Cole said the university is looking to make more connections with for-profit industry over the course of the granting period.

Students must meet certain eligibility requirements to receive payment through the Career Ready Internship Grant. Some of these come from Great Lakes, while others come from Metro.

Great Lakes requires recipients to be undergraduate students with at least 80 credits towards their degree. Likewise, the student must have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), received an award letter and still have a financial need, according to their FAFSA.

Students studying nursing, education and social work are not eligible for the grant, per Great Lakes. The same goes for international students and graduate students. Grant money cannot be used to pay for on-campus interns.

Metro requires that these students have a grade point average of 2.00 or higher and must be in good academic and financial standing.

“We are focusing on two additional academic areas … We are looking to increase the number of internships for credit in the fields of science, technology and mathematics, and in all the fields of business and management,” said Cole. “The intent of the grant is to support students in continuing their education and completing a degree. In addition to that, we hope the grant will allow the university academic programs to increase the number of new relations with businesses, nonprofit agencies, and community organizations.”

Students who receive the grant will make $10.38 an hour. Part-time students can work up to 14 hours per week, and full-time students can work up to 20 hours per week. That said, students will only be paid for a preapproved amount based on their financial need. It’s not guaranteed that students will be paid for all the hours they work over the course of their internship.

The grant has also provided some money for administrative support. Cole said this has given him the funding to hire a student worker for at least the next two years of the grant funding.

This is the second time Metro has received this grant. The first time was a pilot run in fiscal year 2015. During this period, Metro awarded 117 students with funding from the grant. “There were well over three times that who were eligible,” said Cole. Students received between $415 and $3,200 based on their need.

Cole said the grant helps to support student retention rates and degree completion rates. “At the end of the semester [in FY 15], we had a 97 percent re-enrollment rate,” Cole said.

Metro is looking to find ways to sustain this paid-internship program after the grant period is finished. The university and its foundation have committed to raise enough money to match 10 percent of the grant in the second year and 20 percent in the third.

If you are interested in receiving payment through the grant, please contact ICES at internships.metrostate.edu.