

Brian Krug – University of New Hampshire A Faculty Member’s Internship Reflections

While an undergraduate student at Iowa State University, I took a leave of absence for one year to complete two different extended internships working in greenhouses. The first was at DeJong Greenhouses in Pella, Iowa. DeJong’s produces finished pot plants to distribute to florist shops throughout central Iowa. While at DeJong’s I gained experience in the culture of a number of potted crops, propagating geraniums, and filling customer orders.

After working at DeJong Greenhouses from January to May, I worked at Yoder Brothers Inc. in Parrish Florida for six months. While at Yoder Brothers I was extensively involved in the rooting of chrysanthemums, poinsettias, asters, double impatiens and New Guinea impatiens. I also was given the responsibility of day to day care of the impatiens stock plants. In the fall of 2004 I completed a third internship with Ball Holland in The Netherlands.

My experiences through my internships gave me practical training which supplemented my studies at Iowa State. Participating in internships during the peak growing season for each operation allowed me to have an accurate understanding of the floriculture industry. These opportunities strongly reinforced my desired to pursue a career in floriculture.

The three major concerns for students completing long-term internships are housing, wages, and missing school. My internship at DeJong Greenhouses was in-state and I was able to search for an apartment on my own. A fully furnished apartment was located for me in Florida, but I was responsible for rent payments. Any company considering student interns would be well advised to offer some form of housing assistance. During my internships I earned wages sufficient to pay for living expenses and for extra spending money. Taking a leave of absence from school was a concern but the experience and perspective I gained through internships played a major role in obtaining a job after graduation.

Advantages of Internships

Student

- Gain real life experience
- Learn hands on
- See a new part of the country (world)
- Finding a job after the internship
- Risk free trial at a potential employer
- Broaden your scope of experience in the industry

Employer

- Bring active and ideas to your operation
- Don’t have to provide benefits (cheap labor)
- Often get the best of the best students
- Potential new employees

Internship Challenges

- Living expenses
- Time commitment
- Real life can be tough
- Finding suitable and affordable housing

- Time commitment to train
- Training costs