**Alumni Evaluation
Assessing Long-Term Impact of Programs**

Career Internship Network Publications

The Career Internship Network (CIN), a program of the Youth Development Institute, comprises more than thirty New York City institutions with established internship programs for adolescents that provide exposure to, understanding of, and experiences in potential careers. As part of its services, CIN provides professional development workshops for members who run the career development programs. Resource guides and worksheets accompany each workshop to assist program coordinators in their work with interns. This downloadable publication is part of a series adapted from these workshop materials that we want to share with the field. We encourage you to use any of the materials, but please include copyright information on related pages.

Why Keep in Touch with Alumni?

Alumni are valuable assets of your program. Collecting and updating contact information is the most challenging and time-intensive part of any alumni endeavor. Once staff have accurate contact information for alumni, they are set to do a number of things. Staff can contact alumni to:

- Invite them to upcoming events and/or opportunities
- Request their participation in an alumni council that
    - Designs and conducts alumni events for their peers
    - Interviews new rounds of student applicants
    - Participates in the interviewing process when hiring new staff
- Ask for volunteers to serve as peer mentors for new interns
- Survey them about the potential long-term impact of the internship on their lives

Assessing Long-term Impact

Career development internship programs frequently want to ask the question: *What impact if any, did the internship have on the lives of young people that participated in the program?*

Section A. *Sample Alumni Questionnaire*

The sample questionnaire is designed to provide program staff with relevant feedback from alumni on where young people are, what they are doing, and what, if any, impact the program has had. Staff can mail and/or email the questionnaire to alumni for written responses or conduct interviews by telephone or in person. The latter, of course, is more time consuming and not recommended if staff wish to gather information about a large number of alumni.

Section B. *Instructions for Building an Alumni Assessment Database*

Gathering data is the first step in an alumni assessment. Deciding how to store and organize this data is a key determinant of the information you that can be gain from the data collected. The database example is quite straightforward and can easily be done in Excel or other database program.

Section A.   <u>Sample Alumni Questionnaire</u>

Dear Alumni:

      We would love to hear from you about your experience since leaving the internship program. Please complete this questionnaire *thoroughly* and *thoughtfully;* we want to know how you *truthfully* feel about the program's impact on your life since you left.

      Before you start filling out the questionnaire, please take a few moments to sit quietly and think back to your internship experience. If you need more space to write, continue on the back of the paper. Don't hesitate to call or email with questions or comments.

A. BASIC INFORMATION

1. Please give us some basic information

    Name _____**Address**:_____

    Phone: _____ **Email**:_____

       Female _____   **Male** _____   **Age** _____

       How many years did you intern? _____
       What year(s)? _____
       Grade level(s) at time of internship? _____

2. Please check off where you are in your life now:

    __ **Currently in high school**
    __ **Graduated high school**
    __ **Received GED**
    __ **Applying/ied for college** (where: _____)
    __ **Attending college** (where: _____)
    __ **Graduated from college** (where:_____ when:_____)
    __ **Plan to go straight from high school to a job**
    __ **Have a job in my chosen career**
             (name of job/career: _____)

    __ **Have a job (not in my chosen career)**
             (name of job/career: _____)

B. IMPACT OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM ON YOUR LIFE

3. Please reflect on the effect (if any) your internship experience had on your life after leaving the program in the following areas:

        __ **Approach to or experience with your school work** (please explain)

__ **Plans for further education after high school** (please give an *example)*

__ **Approach to choosing a job/career** (please explain)

4. Please complete **all 3 parts** of the following sentence starter:

What has stayed with me most since the internship ended was…

because…

This makes me think…

5. In the **left-hand** column check off any of the skills you learned **DURING** the program.

In the **right-hand column,** please give an example of any of the skills you gained from the internship that you have applied **AFTER** completing the program.

During & After Skill Chart

GAINED IN PROGRAM	USED AFTER PROGRAM EXAMPLES
Employee etiquette (punctuality, attendance, quality work) ____	
How to apply for a job and/or college ____	
Person-to person communication ____	
Public Speaking ____	
Time-management ____	
Working well with others ____	
Conflict resolution ____	
Leadership in a group ____	
Self initiative, taking action on your own___ ____	

Section B. *Instructions for Building an Alumni Assessment Database*

It is important to build the program's alumni assessment database and questionnaire simultaneously to allow for easy management of data received. Before beginning, it is recommended that staff already collect recent and correct contact information for alumni. (Tip: Every time a staff member reaches out to alumni ask, them if they have contact information for peers from the program. Staff can also reach out to school internship coordinators to see if they have updated information.

Step 1: Determine Goals

Carefully consider and identify, "Why do we want to undertake this assessment? How will the audience and purpose influence the questions we ask and the database format?"

Step 2: Devise Your Questionnaire[1]

Thoroughly consider the type of information your programs wants to collect and how the program will use it. Check to make sure that the data requested is related to program goals. (Note: the earlier sample questionnaire in this file may not meet your needs.)

Step 3: Identify Database Fields to Correspond to Each of Your Separate Questionnaire Items

Look back at the questions in the sample questionnaire above. Note that there is a *separate* field for each of the items in the form.

Alumni Database Fields

First Name	Last Name	Contact information	Impact once completed: regarding: school work	Impact once completed: regarding more education	Impact once completed: regarding job/career	*What has stayed with me most since the internship ended was…* *because…* *This makes me think…*	Codes for themes	During & After Skill Chart	Codes for themes
Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4	Field 5	Field 6	Field 7	Field 8	Field 9	Field 10

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[1] Tip: If possible use websites such as http://www.surveymonkey.com/ to put your questionnaire up on the web for alumni to answer directly. This sort of website organizes and in some cases analyzes your data for you.

Step 4: *Collecting and Sorting the Data*

A. To Begin
- Determine who will collect, input, and interpret data[2]
- Devise methods of data collection[3]

B. Updated Contact Information   (Fields 1-3)
- Contact intern using address/phone/email from original application
- Contact guardians and/or school (information from original paperwork)
- Ask other alumni from same cohort for peer contact information
- Ask mentors for possible information/leads for their past interns

C. Impact of the Program post-Completion   (Fields 4-6)
- Transcribe information from emails, conversations, and/or hardcopy documents into database fields about the impact of the program on students' school work, continuing education choices, and/or jobs.

D. Description of Significant Impact   (Field 7)
- Enter the qualitative information that alumni report about the program's most significant impact on their lives

E. Coding Themes   (Field 8)
- After you have entered all the data for each responder, take a closer look at field 7. On a hard copy of the database, circle themes and patterns that keep appearing throughout the data in column 7. Give each theme a separate code (such as "A" for the impact of working one-on-one with a mentor). Enter the code into field 8. Collate data by themes: i.e. gather all the "A"s to get a sense of the impact working-with-a-mentor had on interns

F. Skills Charts   (Field 9)
- Enter the skills alumni report gaining during the program and that they applied after completion

G. Codes for Themes   (Field 10)
- Repeat the process of determining patterns and themes within the qualitative data and apply relevant codes

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[2] Tips:
. One person should be responsible for collecting and inputting the data.
. Persistence is everything, calling, recalling, re-emailing, and trying every lead.

[3] Tip: to gain the highest response rate possible, provide incentives such as a raffle or gift card for college-related expenses.

Step 5: Data Analysis

The time consuming process of coding and sorting coded data is crucial in analyzing the data you have collected. Carefully examine your coded data and make notes of what patterns or themes you see. Do NOT interpret the information yet. You are solely making objective observations.

Step 6: Interpretation

Step back and take a look at what your analysis appears to indicate. You can NOT claim that your program definitely caused a particular outcome after the program. However, you can say in your reports to funders and stakeholders that there was a correspondence between program results and the particular outcomes the program aimed to achieve with young people.

Step 7: Reporting & Disseminating

Make your findings official by writing a report. The report should describe the program and outline program goals and briefly describe the method you used to go about your alumni assessment. Then present your results and describe recommendations for changes in your program you may make in response to findings.