Results from the College Internship Study at Benedict College

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CCWT CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON College-Workforce Transitions

The College Internship Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report includes findings from the first round of data collection (Fall 2019) at Benedict College for *The College Internship Study,* which is a national mixed-methods longitudinal study of internship programs conducted by the Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison). The findings are based on an interdisciplinary sample of students who took an online survey (n = 114) and participated in focus groups with students who have and who have not had an internship experience (n = 14), and interviews with career advisors and faculty (n = 7).

We would like to thank Benedict College for allowing our research team to visit Columbia and conduct this study with your students, faculty and community members, and hope that our findings are useful as you work towards improving internships and work-based learning for your students. As our research moves into its second year, we will focus on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the students, faculty and staff at Benedict College and employer partners with respect to internships and students' overall experiences with the pandemic and its impacts on their studies and career goals.

Four research questions guide our study: (1) How many students are participating in internship programs, and does participation vary by student demographics, academic status, or life/ employment situation? (2) What barriers exist for students to participate in internship programs? (3) What is the structure and format of internship programs? And, (4) How, if at all, is program structure and format associated with student satisfaction with their internships and their estimation of the value of the internship on their career development?

Some key findings from our analysis include:

- Benedict College has a strong tradition of experiential education in the form of service learning, and along with activities supported by the United Negro College Fund's Career Pathway Initiative (UNCF-CPI), there is considerable interest in and support for internships.
- Educators at Benedict College considered internships to be valuable for their students by providing experiential learning that allows students to cultivate soft skills such as time management and work ethic, to apply classroom learning in the context of the workplace, and to build their resume and network with professionals. Also, some educators at Benedict College discussed their practice of designing internships to accommodate students' limitations on account of a disability or other experiences, and we consider this practice of incorporating accommodations within internship design to be a best practice worthy of emulating.
- Thirty-two percent (n = 36) of the respondents to our survey had participated in an internship program within the past year, which also means that 68% (n = 78) had not taken an internship;

- Of the students who had taken an internship, 10% (n = 11) were in programs that did not require an internship while 85% (n = 97) reported that internships were required to graduate;
- Participation in internships was not correlated with many of the demographic variables measured in our survey, such as gender, race, or first-generation college student status. However, students with a higher parental income, part-time employment, or no employment were more likely to have participated in an internship.
- Eighty five percent (n = 66) of students who did not take an internship had wanted to do so. Barriers to participation in internships included a heavy course load (66.7%), the need to work at their current job (51.5%), a lack of internship opportunities (48.5%), a lack of transportation (42.4%), insufficient pay offered (31.8%), and a lack of childcare (22.7%). These obstacles often intersected with one another such that individual students experienced more than one at a time. Focus group participants also reported several additional barriers to their participation in internships, including concerns with the application process, company biases against Benedict College, struggles with transportation needed for internships, and a lack of time because of conflicting obligations.
- Benedict College students in our study reported positive experience with their internships, including a strong link between academic programs and their internships, high levels of perceived supervisor support and supervisor mentoring, strong goal clarity, high levels of task autonomy, and tasks that were similar to entry-level jobs. Additionally, the majority of students in our study reported that they were very satisfied or extremely satisfied with their internship experiences, and felt that their internships provided developmental value to their academic learning and career development. In addition, several factors that influence student experiences with internships were also identified by focus group narratives, including internship requirements and academic coordination, compensation, supervision, and the internship's relation to academic interests and career goals.
- While the impacts of internship participation on employment status and wages will be studied over the next 12 months, data from the focus groups suggest that short-term outcomes of participating in an internship program for this sample of Benedict College students include the opportunity to learn and practice skills, explore career goals, gain "real world experience", and enhancing their resume.

This report concludes with recommendations for specific strategies that students, faculty and staff at Benedict College, and employers who supervise student-interns, can employ to increase participation, access, and program quality for Benedict College students. We provide these recommendations with the recognition that faculty, staff and administrators at Benedict College are best positioned to design and implement programs that meet the unique needs of academic programs and students, and in the hopes that our evidence-based insights about students' experiences with internship programs can be used to make these practices more equitable and effective for all students.

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION: Why Study College Internships?

Internships are widely perceived as important co-curricular experiences that can enhance student learning and facilitate their transition to the workforce. Advocates argue that through internships, students can develop new skills and abilities by transferring academic knowledge to real-world tasks, explore different career options, develop new professional networks and even obtain full-time employment. At the same time, employers can use internship programs to develop a pipeline of new recruits that can be vetted on the job for future employment, and postsecondary institutions can increase their students' career prospects and real-world experiences. Given these potential outcomes, internships are often described as a "win-win-win" situation for higher education, employers, and students themselves (National Association of Colleges & Employers, 2018). Furthermore, internships and similar forms of work-based learning (WBL) have been designated as a "high-impact" practice that improves student outcomes (Kuh, 2008; Parker, Kilgo, Sheets & Pascarella, 2016), leading many state governments, colleges and universities, and workforce development boards to promote internship programs as a desirable solution to regional education-to-employment problems.

However, the research literature clearly indicates that internships are neither easy to design and implement, nor are they a panacea for the long-standing problems of cultivating students' skills and easing their entry into the labor market (Hora, Wolfgram, & Thompson, 2017). Access to internships themselves can be difficult, particularly for students from particular groups, including students who are low-income or economically marginalized, first-generation college students, students who are members of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, and students who may be unable to engage in unpaid labor and/or lack social networks that facilitate participation in internship programs. Furthermore, while internships can provide a rich, experiential learning opportunity for students, long promoted by education theorists and learning scientists (e.g., Dewey, 1938; Resnick, 1987), designing a robust learning experience within an internship is much easier said than done.

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Despite these challenges of access and program quality, policymakers and educators rightfully view internships as a potentially important and influential component of students' education and career development. Before the potential of internships can be fully realized, however, it is necessary to document the current state-of-affairs at the institutional level so that future planning can be based on rigorous evidence. For instance, data on student participation and experiences with internships as well as the perspectives of career services staff and employers can be used to: (1) identify strengths and weaknesses in current programming, (2) establish a baseline for long-term analysis of program quality and impacts, and (3) inform decision-making about future program development and resource allocation.

In early 2018, the Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions (CCWT) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison launched the College Internship Study as a translational research program that could provide key stakeholders with robust, actionable evidence about internship programs. Our aim in this study is to provide institutional leaders, faculty and instructors, and career services professionals at Benedict College with rigorous data on issues related to internship program access and quality. In doing so, we place

students' experiences and perspectives at the heart of the analysis while also attending to the critical issue of institutional capacity—two considerations that should guide decision-making about future policy and practice around internship programs.

II. BACKGROUND: What does the research literature say about internships?

An extensive body of research exists on college internships across a variety of disciplines and countries, leading to a literature that is simultaneously robust and inconsistent (Hora, Wolfgram, & Thompson, 2017). The robustness of the literature is evident in numerous studies from different national and disciplinary perspectives that have documented the positive impact of internships on student outcomes. For instance, in a recent study (Nunley, Pugh, Romero, & Seals, 2016), students who listed an internship on their resume received 14% more offers for an interview than those who did not. Evidence is growing that internships also lead to lower rates of unemployment after graduation, higher wages, and even better grades than students who do not have an internship. Specifically, students who had an internship have 15% lower unemployment (Silva et al.,2015), 6% higher wages five years after graduation (Saniter & Siedler, 2014), and final year grades that are 3.4% higher than those who did not have an internship (Binder, Baguley, Crook, & Miller, 2015).

However, the literature is also limited in several important ways. One of the biggest challenges facing the field of internship research is the lack of clear and standardized definitions regarding internships in general. For instance, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2018) is an important source of information about college internships in the United States, but the survey item encompasses a diverse array of (undefined) experiences that can be interpreted in a myriad of ways by survey respondents. Thus, claims based on NSSE data that internships are a high-impact practice that universally lead to student engagement and success (e.g., Kuh, 2008) should be interpreted with caution.

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Furthermore, before claiming causal relations between particular programs and student outcomes, it is essential to first describe these variables and the mechanisms that may govern their relations (Loeb et al., 2017). Consequently, descriptive research on critical mediating factors such as the structure and format of internships is essential in order to avoid treating the internship experience like a "black box" that mysteriously transforms students into work-ready individuals (Silva et al., 2016, p. 704). Similarly, it is untenable to assume that all internships provide a robust experiential learning opportunity in the spirit of the types of hands-on learning envisioned by educational theorists (e.g., Dewey, 1938; Resnick, 1987). As a result, research examining the specific structural features of the learning environment that comprise the internship experience is particularly needed to inform internship policy and practice (Cannon & Geddes, 2019).

In our study, we build upon promising lines of inquiry that examine how features of internship program structure - such as compensation, quality of supervision, and task clarity – may impact student outcomes.

These programmatic features are important to consider because research on the coordination between employers and academic programs shows that the more internships are clearly coordinated with academic coursework, the more students will gain from the overall experience (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami, 2010). Another important factor in perceived internship quality and efficacy is the behavior of job-site supervisors. Active and meaningful supervisor support was found to positively impact business students' satisfaction with the internship experience (D'abate, Youndt, & Wenzel, 2009), and was also positively associated with job pursuit, satisfaction, and career development in a study of 99 students in an undergraduate management program (McHugh, 2016). Other program design features that have been associated with satisfaction and other student outcomes include the duration of internships (Murphy, Merritt, & Gibbons, 2013), the degree of student autonomy to design and perform tasks (Virtanen, Tynjala & Etelapelto, 2014), the clarity and variety of work tasks (Bauer et al., 2007; Beenen & Rousseau, 2010), and the presence of detailed feedback from both educators and employers (Rothman, 2007).

> **Features of internships examined in this study:** Coordination between employers and academic programs, Quality of supervision and mentoring, Duration of internship, Degree of student task autonomy, Clarity and variety of work tasks, Presence of detailed feedback.

With respect to outcome measures, some of the most common effects of internship participation examined in the literature are those of students' employment status, employer demand, or students' perceived readiness to enter the labor market (e.g., Baert, Neyt, Siedler, Tobback, & Verhaest, 2019; Jung & Lee, 2017; Nunley, Pugh, Romero, & Seals, 2010; Powers, Chen, Prasad, Gilmartin, & Sheppard, 2018; Weible & McClure, 2011). While these long-term outcomes of internships are important, another effect of experiential and work-based learning is the development of students' psychological resilience and self-concept (Callanan & Benzing, 2004; Paulson & Eugene Baker, 1999; Taylor, 1988). A concept in vocational psychology that is particularly salient for college students in a labor market that increasingly features short-term contract work and frequent job switching is that of career adaptability, or the psychosocial capacity and skills to continuously adapt, persist, and self-manage one's career tasks, transitions, and personal traumas (Savickas, 1997, 2005), which is a psychosocial variable examined in our study.

> **Outcomes of internships examined in this study:**
> - Student satisfaction with the experience
> - Enhanced sense of career goals
> - Enhanced understanding of academic coursework
> - Wages (for longitudinal data)
> - Employment status (for longitudinal data)

Finally, career advisors and postsecondary educators are increasingly concerned about the problem of access, particularly for low-income, first-generation students who may be unable to engage in unpaid labor and/or lack transportation, child-care, or social networks that facilitate participation on internship programs (Curiale, 2009; Finley & McNair, 2013; Perlin 2012). Additionally, internship opportunities in rural areas and for students in certain fields (e.g., arts and humanities) may be limited, further exacerbating the access problem that may afflict students in many of our nation's colleges and universities. Consequently, we examine the obstacles that may be preventing some students from pursuing and successfully completing an

internship, with the ultimate goal of helping your institution to address these barriers so that all students can participate in a high-quality work-based learning experience.

III. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Founded in 1870, Benedict College is a private, co-educational, liberal arts, Historically Black College located in Columbia, South Carolina. Benedict College was recently ranked by Washington Monthly as one of the top colleges for creating social mobility among low-income students, and for producing cutting edge scholarship and research (Benedict College, 2020a). Benedict College is committed to the academic success of its' students, partnering with the community to provide a quality educational experience, as stated in the College's statement of "A Vision for Benedict College:"

> *Benedict College will be a leader in providing transformative learning experiences for a diverse student body, defined by superior cultural and professional competencies that are nurtured and developed by faculty, staff and stakeholders who value innovation, customer service, community and industry engagement (Benedict College, 2020b).*

Enrollment, Staffing, and Programs

Benedict College has 1,813 students enrolled for the Spring 2020 semester, with 793 identifying as male and 1,020 identifying as female, in 33 baccalaureate programs. According to the Benedict College webpage, the new student population is 53% in-state students, 44% out-of-state, 3% international and 2.8% of students from the District of Columbia (DC) area. In addition, a total of 319 seniors graduated in the 2016-2017 academic year. Eighty percent of the College's 104 faculty are full-time appointments and 20% are part-time, with 60% of the faculty holding a doctorate or equivalent degree. Benedict College also has an office governing all campus career-related activities that is called the Career Pathways Initiative Service-Learning (CPISLP). According to the office's website, there were 64 career readiness workshops offered during the 2018-2019 school year, 394 student attendees at the annual career fair, 43,093 students engaged in hours of service, and over $1 million in student service volunteer impacts (Benedict College, 2020a).

Snapshot of the regional economy

Benedict College is located in Richland County and it is part of the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area. According to official statistics, the county population is evenly split between Whites and African Americans/ Black, with a share of about 46% of the total population for each group. The population of Hispanic/Latinx origin is estimated at 5% and almost 67% of residents in Richland County are in the labor force. A quarter of them have jobs in the educational services and health care and social assistance industries (24.9%), which are, by far, the dominant industries in the area. The next tier of industries consists of four areas that capture similar shares of jobs in the region: Retail trade (12.6%), entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (10.7%), professional, scientific, management and administrative services (9.7%), and finance, insurance and real estate (8.6%). Official accounts also show that the estimated poverty rate for the county almost reached 17% for the period 2013-2017 (American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2013-2017).

The unemployment rate in the Columbia area is slightly below the national trend. In the past year unemployment came down from 3.4% to 2.2%. At the time our survey was conducted, unemployment hovered around 2% (Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2019). The most recent data (Table 1) shows that the local economy is dominated by the private sector, which contributes nearly 80% to the local gross domestic product. In the private sector, finance, insurance, and real estate is the largest contributor with 19.2%, with manufacturing being the next largest share of the economy (12%). Government industries contribute with a whole 20% of the local GDP (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2019).

Table 1. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Columbia, SC Metropolitan Statistical Area 2018 (thousands of current dollars)

Description	GDP 2018 (current USD)	% of industry total
All industry total	43,118,821	
Private industries	34,448,273	79.89
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	240,822	0.56
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	78,476	0.18
Utilities	1,115,468	2.59
Construction	1,815,624	4.21
Manufacturing	5,146,412	11.94
Durable goods manufacturing	2,301,811	5.34
Nondurable goods manufacturing	2,844,600	6.60

Description	GDP 2018 (current USD)	% of industry total
Wholesale trade	2,910,365	6.75
Retail trade	2,580,037	5.98
Transportation and warehousing	910,950	2.11
Information	1,343,633	3.12
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	8,281,144	19.21
Finance and insurance	3,144,363	7.29
Real estate and rental and leasing	5,136,781	11.91
Professional and business services	(D)	
Professional, scientific, and technical services	(D)	
Management of companies and enterprises	(D)	
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	1,515,756	3.52
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	3,215,151	7.46
Educational services	343,169	0.80
Health care and social assistance	2,871,981	6.66
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	(D)	
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	(D)	
Accommodation and food services	(D)	
Other services (except government and government enterprises)	(D)	
Government and government enterprises	8,670,548	20.11

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, December 12, 2019 update

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is in thousands of current dollars (not adjusted for inflation). Industry detail is based on the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

(D) Not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information; estimates are included in higher-level totals.

In terms of numbers of jobs, compared to the beginning of the decade, the industries that appear to have the fastest growth are agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining (31% more jobs than in 2010), retail trade (+25%), entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (+24%), and transportation, warehousing and utilities (21.8%) (American Community Survey, 2010, 2017).

This overall picture of the regional economy, including the sectoral distribution and strength of the economy and the rates of participation in the workforce, are an important context for understanding the internship participation and experiences of students at Benedict College.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The College Internship Study is a mixed-methods longitudinal study of internship programs that is guided by the following research questions: (1) How many students are participating in internship programs, and does participation vary by student demographics, academic status, or life/employment situation? (2) What barriers exist for students to participate in internship programs? (3) What is the structure and format of internship programs? And, (4) How, if at all, is program structure and format associated with student satisfaction with their internships and their estimation of the value of the internship on their career development?[1]

The data collected for the study include an online survey of students, focus groups with students who have and who have not had an internship experience, interviews with individuals (e.g., faculty) involved in internship program administration and implementation, and documents and online resources about internship programs and services at the institution. A team of trained researchers collected this data at Benedict College in the Fall of 2019. The online survey was administered to 584 students in the second half of their program, and 114 responded which resulted in a response rate of 19.5%. The response rate of female students is higher than the rate of male students. [2]

The survey included questions about student demographics, characteristics of internship programs, barriers to internship participation, self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, and students' career adaptability (i.e., a psychological construct linked to positive vocational outcomes). At the conclusion of the survey, students were asked to indicate an interest in volunteering for focus groups. Fourteen students volunteered for a 45-60 minute focus group; it included between 1 and 3 students in which researchers asked more in-depth questions about experiences with and barriers to internships. In addition, seven educators participated in an hour-long interview regarding their own experiences administering and facilitating internships for students at Benedict College (see Table 2).

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[1] The data reported here represent the first phase of data collection at Benedict College in Fall 2019 (Time 1). Data also will be collected in Fall 2020 (Time 2), and will include a follow-up survey of students who responded to the T1 survey, which will represent a panel of students to track as they enter the workforce. Interviews will also be conducted with a sub-sample of these students, and educators and employers in order to assess the nature of internship programming and/or effects over time.
[2] The analysis was not influenced by this issue as we mainly rely on descriptive statistics that are not gender related. Conclusive findings regarding gender's influence on internship participation were not made.

Table 2: Description of Fall 2019 sample

	Survey	Focus Groups	Interviews
Students	114	10 (n = 14 individuals)	N/A
Educators	N/A	N/A	7
Faculty/instructors	N/A	N/A	7
Career advisors	N/A	N/A	0

Table 3: Description of student sample

	Survey Sample	Institutional Population
Total	114	586
Gender	Male = 33 | 28.95% Female = 80 | 70.18%	Male = 271 | 46.25% Female = 315 | 53.75%
Race	Asian = 2 | 1.75% Black = 104 | 91.23% Hispanic = 2 | 1.75% American Indian or Alaska Native = 4 | 4.51% White = 1 | 0.88%	Asian = 5 | 0.86% Black = 542 | 92.81% Hispanic = 12 | 2.1% White = 7 | 1.20%
1st gen status	Yes = 65 | 57.02% No = 49 | 42.98%	Yes = Not reported No = Not reported

The data were analyzed used multiple methods, including qualitative analytic techniques such as inductive theme analysis of interview and focus group transcripts; as well as quantitative analytic techniques such as descriptive analyses of survey responses, chi-square testing, Fisher's exact test of independence, logistic regression, and multiple regression analysis of survey data. In our study, we advance no claims of causality among internship program participation and/or design features and student outcomes, but instead provide the type of descriptive research that must precede such empirical research and explore associations among these variables (Loeb et al., 2017). A more detailed description of our research methodology is included in at the end of this report (Appendix A).

V. RESULTS: Institutional capacity and procedures for administering internship programs

One of the goals of our research was to map the institutional practices in place regarding how internship programs are designed, implemented, and monitored on campus. This kind of diagnostic assessment can provide a "road map" of the four Ws—where, who, what, and when—of a program or initiative. Without such information at hand, it is difficult to ascertain precisely how programs like internships function within a complex organization, what (if any) kinds of mechanisms may be at work in shaping student outcomes, and where strengths and weaknesses exist that could be addressed in future programming. In the case of internship programs, which are often not administered through a centralized unit (e.g., a single career services office) but are managed by multiple parties across (and even outside of) campus, this type of diagnostic mapping is even more important. At Benedict College, we collected information on these issues from staff and students, along with an analysis of online and hard-copy documents.

Are internships required to graduate from Benedict College?

It is important to consider three issues about how internship programs are designed and implemented at Benedict College. First, the fact that Benedict College is located in a local labor market with other postsecondary institutions, especially the University of South Carolina, makes competition for internship placements challenging for some students at Benedict College. Second, some respondents observed that service-learning has a long history at Benedict College, such that the institutional culture has supported experiential learning for some time. Finally, the presence of the United Negro College Fund's Career Pathway Initiative (CPI), which supports the Service-Learning Program office, represents an important centralized effort to promote experiential learning programs such as internships.

The CPI office is responsible for both the career services and service-learning programs at Benedict, and thus provides students across the College with information about internship opportunities. The CPI office is also responsible for managing Purple Briefcase (a career management system) for the College, and conducts the vetting of new employers and ensures that their internship programs are in the best interest of the students and college. Once a site is approved, they post the opportunity to Purple Briefcase. In addition, the CPI office is working with the company Parker Dewey to offer what are known as "micro-internships," or short term paid projects that firms and organizations need to be conducted as part of their regular work.

The presence and activities of the CPI office are relevant because internship programming at Benedict College is decentralized and overseen by individual departments and Colleges. For example, certain academic majors across the institution – e.g., Social Work has a required practicum, Criminal Justice has a required field experience – have established internships or internship-like experiences that are mandatory for students to graduate. While deeply embedded in some academic programs and departments, internships are not an institution-wide requirement that students must meet in order to graduate from Benedict College. However, students in our focus groups offered differing views on whether internships were required for ALL students at Benedict College, indicating some confusion on the matter. In addition, there appears to be a close relationship between service-learning and internships at Benedict College. In the case of pre-service K-12 teacher education, which is a degree program that requires school-based student teaching in order to graduate, there

are elements of service-learning and off-campus experiences that are part of the curriculum in the first three years. Then, in students' senior year, they are required to do off-campus student teaching, which one educator told us that this should not be a big surprise given the emphasis on service-learning in the earlier part of the degree program. While we do not include student teaching (or nursing and allied health practicums) in our definition of internships, there is clearly a close relationship between required service-learning courses and experiential education at Benedict College.

Who is in charge of administering internship programs?

As previously mentioned, the administration of internship programs at Benedict College is decentralized across the schools and academic programs. As a result, individual departments and/or academic programs are in charge of designing, implementing, and evaluating internship programs. In some cases (e.g., Social Work), there are professional standards that dictate how internships are structured, while in other departments that do not have national accreditation requirements, internship programs are designed according to departmental needs and capacities.

In some cases, Benedict College has full-time professional staff (e.g., the Field Education Director in Social Work) who are tasked with managing the department's internship program. In other cases, the College has full-time faculty who also serve as coordinators for their departments' internships within the schools (e.g., the faculty coordinator within the School of Business and Entrepreneurship and Department Chair in Education Child and Family Studies).

At the same time, it is important to note that the CPI Office is playing an important role in attempts to standardize internship programming on campus. At the time of our visit to Benedict College, CPI staff met with various campus stakeholders to discuss the potential standardization of internships on campus. This process involved evaluating syllabi for courses, incorporating survey queries in evaluations, reviewing internship-related contracts and agreements, all with the goal of determining whether or not there is a way to bring more uniformity to the internship experience at the College.

As is the case at many postsecondary institutions, this effort is viewed both positively and negatively by campus stakeholders. An educator spoke in detail about both the positive and negative approach to standardizing internships on campus, emphasizing the importance of relationship building between individual educators and employers:

> I can see some good in (standardization), but I can also see some bad in it too. The good in it is that it's good to have standards, and it is good to have a template that you can follow. But, there's no one-size-fit-all. And so, I also think there needs to be some flexibility and a little independence in there to allow the internship coordinator some flexibility, because when it comes to building and maintaining relationships, if the internship coordinator or supervisor has built those relationships, and you may pass those relationships onto other people, they may not nourish them or encourage them like you do. So, I can kind of see both sides of it.

In some cases, department staff are hoping that they can maintain their unique post-internship evaluation procedures while just adding on CPI suggested questions, which would maintain the system that has been developed over the course of several years.

What is involved in the administration of internship programs?

In considering how Benedict College administers internship programs, participants in our study emphasized the importance of building relationships. A number of professional staff and faculty across Benedict College are responsible for maintaining and growing departments' relationships with employers and various organizations or agencies, which are often based on personal connection with industry. In addition, they are tasked with taking time to cultivate relationships with new organizations. Some of these new contacts are made in response to students' connections or interests, which is one way that Benedict College staff are striving to keep their programs relevant and interesting to students.

The next step for many departments is matching students to employers. This process varies across programs. In one department, students are provided with a list of employers and students indicate their first, second, and third internship preference. In the event that a student's preferred employer is not on the list, the department may seek out new internship sites to meet student needs. In another case, staff attempt to match individual students with employers:

> I gather (employer contacts) throughout the year, and the College will send me different companies and that are looking for internships for students and I try to match the student with that company if I think it's a good fit. And maybe give them two or three to choose from. I also try to go out and find some of the ones on my own for them, and they (students) also have to go out and seek internships sometimes.

Prior to the student choosing their internship site, some departments require an initial consultation with the internship coordinator to discuss their career interests, any personal information that would impact the internship experience, and overall readiness to be in the field. For example, if a student has had personal trauma dealing with sexual assault, or a student has a hearing disability, the coordinator places the student within an agency/organization that may not deal with sexual assault, or contact an organization that can facilitate a student with a hearing disability. An internship coordinator stated:

Students' backgrounds are really important. If I've had a student that has disclosed to me that they've been sexually abused in their past, we're going to have a conversation about what kind of placement they think would be best for them.

When students have selected a site for an internship, faculty coordinators or professional staff sometimes have protocols to follow prior to a student starting the internship. For example, some departments require an agreement or contract to be signed by all parties (i.e., students, employers/supervisor/mentor, and internship administrator). These agreements vary across departments, but may include the objectives of the internship program, expectations of the employer/supervisor/mentor, student resume's, safety checklist, and so on. In some instances, the internship staff would meet with the students and employer to go over the agreement and ensure that students would gain meaningful experiences based off the student's skillset and courses taken to date and goals established by site supervisor and student.

Finally, an important part of internship program administration at Benedict College is their coordination with internship courses. In some departments, internships are integrated within the curriculum and students are required to complete a course that involves weekly, or bi-weekly meetings in conjunction with hours onsite at the organization. For example, one educator told us of the highly structured internship program in her department:

> *So, the preparation is also around making sure that students are both able and prepared to go both to work and to serve in practice. Once they are in field, we have a field seminar, so they meet with me every Friday. In class, and we talk about what's going on in their field placement.*

In these cases, there is a built-in feedback loop for the student to discuss their experience and voice any concerns about their internship, which is a best practice in terms of designing and continually improving work-based learning programs in higher education.

When do these activities take place?

Typically, internships occurred during the academic semester and summer recess. Many of the educators that we interviewed stated that the internship experience was centered on an academic course (for-credit) that students registered for and attended in conjunction with work hours at an internship site. One educator described the timing of internship programs in his department:

> *The internship program involves classroom instruction the first four weeks of the semester. And we talk about workplace etiquette. We talk about soft skills and the role soft skills in a successful internship. We also research our directory of partners. And students begin to send out letters of interest and requests for internships. And then, the next 12 weeks are spent on the internship because its required. The internship requires 120 hours to complete it.*

Besides providing an example of how internships are often integrated with classroom instruction at Benedict College, this observation also highlights the importance of "employability" or "soft" skills for students, and the wide range of issues and topics that faculty and staff are considering as they design and implement internship programs for their students.

V. RESULTS: Insights from educators about the value of internships for students

The internship coordinators on campus consider it essential for students to gain real-world experience for various reasons, including to explore and determine career goals and to connect with professionals and gain future employment. Moreover, the practical experience also builds on the critical skills necessary for students to be successful, such as timeliness, effort, and development as a young professional. Additionally, internship experiences allow students to connect course content to the field. In all, Benedict personnel view internship programs as a mechanism to build the students' resume and provide meaningful opportunities to develop and nourish relationships for future employment. An internship coordinator discusses the insight gained by participating in an internship experience:

> *Psychology and the Criminal Justice Administration...give the students some insight into the services that are provided by the agencies in their major. And it [internships] help them have time to assess whether they actually want to go into the field that they've chosen as a major.*

Here, the internship coordinator highlights how the internship experience plays an important role for the students' professional development, noting the importance of the connection between the internship experience and how it mirrors the professional world. Similarly, another educator shares the importance of being ready and performing well during internships as a means of future employment:

> *The internship is like a job. And so, you have to be ready mentally, spiritually, psychologically. I mean, all of that, and if you're missing any of that, then, you know, possibly, your internship experience is not going to be a good one. You are auditioning for a job, and one of things I tell my students is that, you know, if you're prepared for the internship, and if you go there and do well, then they hire you, because I tell them that's what happened to me. My internship, I went in, did it, did it well. And my internship boss, he gave me a job the day that I graduated. Your employers are … going to be watching you to see how serious you're taking it.*

And another internship director reveals the importance of nurturing students and connecting with them on a personal level to coach them into an internship:

> *I think, in order for students to be able to, you know, fully appreciate the internships…nurturing the experience and helping them to be employable [are important]. And so, in our department, the department chair, or one of the two faculty members in education, are the ones who actually, you know, get the one-on-one with the students. But I say it is a challenge, but then, it's also a good thing, because you get to have intimate relationships with your students. But at the same time, just being able to have a difference of perspectives for the students to help them build and to help them grow and to be better graduates. I mean, because we want them to use the internship, like you said, too, you know, find employment.*

The faculty at Benedict are committed to providing robust experiential learning opportunities for students. Educators view internships as critical to being able to foster meaningful relationships with students and developing the necessary skills for them to be successful in the world of work, and lastly, creating meaningful partnerships that lead to employment of their students.

VI. RESULTS: Which students are taking internships at Benedict College?

In this section we present findings from the online survey regarding the number of students at Benedict College who have (and have not) participated in internships.

Survey results: How many students are participating in internships?

One of the most fundamental questions facing research, policy, and practice on college internships is how many students are participating in these programs. Among our study sample (n = 114) we found that 31.6% had an internship in the past 12 months. Among the 35 students who reported their numbers of internships, 23 students (66%) had only one internship experience and 6 students (17%) had two internships. The rest of the students (n=6, 17%) had three or more internship experiences.

Figure 1. In the past 12 months, have you participated in an internship? (n = 114)

Yes	36 (31.6%)
No	78 (68.4%)
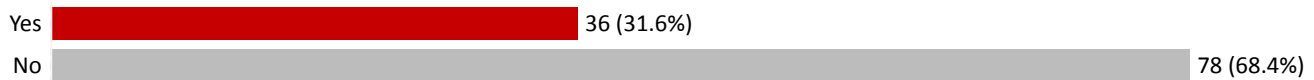
These results indicate that a large number – approximately two thirds of the study sample – have not had an internship experience. This result should be carefully interpreted and considered along with other issues, including barriers to participation for students (e.g., compensation), availability of employer hosts, and requirements of and relevance for individual students and/or their academic programs to complete an internship. In the following sections of this report, we examine some of the factors associated with internship participation.

Survey results: Are there any demographic, life circumstance, psychological, or program characteristics that are associated with participation and non-participation in internship programs?

A wide range of factors may explain why a student elects to take an internship (or not), and understanding these factors is essential for institutional stakeholders who aim to improve access to these workplace learning experiences. In this section we report findings regarding differences in internship participation according to four categories: demographic variables (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation college status, disability status, and parents' income), life circumstances (i.e., employment status, food insecurity, paying rent or mortgage), psychological variables (i.e., career adaptability), and features of academic programs (i.e., requirement to take internships, academic enrollment, major, and GPA).

Demographic characteristics and internship participation

Little research exists on the relationship between participation in internship programs and demographic characteristics of college students. Given growing concerns about access to internship programs — particularly for students of color, low-income and first-generation college students — we examine the issue of equitable access for groups of students.

A higher percentage of male stuents in our sample reported having internship experience than female students (see Figure 2; 45.5% vs 26.3%).[3] Most of the participating students (91.2%, n = 104) are Black or African American, and 33.7% (n = 35) of them had internship experiences and 66.3% (n = 69) of them had no internship experiences. In addition, internship participation rate was slightly lower for first-generation students than continuing generation students (see Figure 4; 30.8% vs 32.7%)

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3 Despite the gap of participation rates showed by the data, chi-square test shows that the difference is not statistically significant (p = 0.07).

Figure 2.[4] Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No), by Gender (n = 113)*

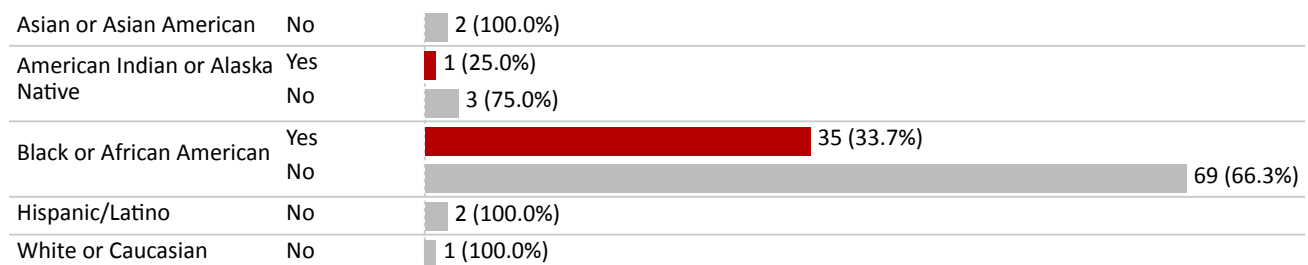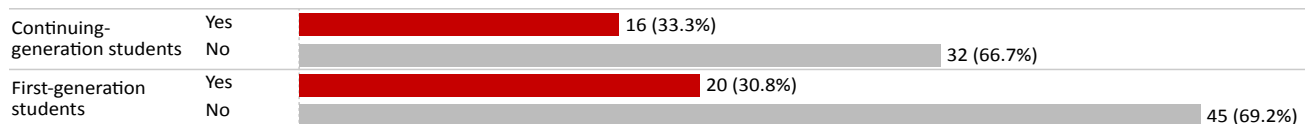|		
Female	Yes	21 (26.3%)
	No	59 (73.8%)
Male	Yes	15 (45.5%)
	No	18 (54.5%)
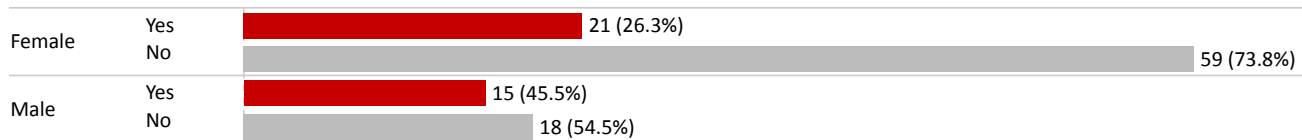
*Note: One participant who reported "Non-binary/Genderqueer" is not included in this figure.

Figure 3. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No), by Race / Ethnicity (n = 114)*

Asian or Asian American	No	2 (100.0%)
American Indian or Alaska Native	Yes	1 (25.0%)
	No	3 (75.0%)
Black or African American	Yes	35 (33.7%)
	No	69 (66.3%)
Hispanic/Latino	No	2 (100.0%)
White or Caucasian	No	1 (100.0%)

*Note: Foreign or nonresident alien, Two or More Races, and Others were excluded from this figure.

**Figure 4. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No),
by First-Generation College Student Status (FGS) (n = 114)**

Continuing-generation students	Yes	16 (33.3%)
	No	32 (66.7%)
First-generation students	Yes	20 (30.8%)
	No	45 (69.2%)

Lastly, parental income is used here as an indicator of students' socio-economic status (see Figure 5.1). We further explored the relationship between internship participation and parental income based on state and local median annual income (see Figure 5.2). The median annual household income in 2018 was $52,306 [5] in South Carolina and $53,765 [6] in Columbia. Our parental income brackets did not fit exactly with the median income, so we grouped students' self-reported parental income into below and above $60,000, the closest cut point below and above median annual household income. The internship participation rate for students from below the state median household income (34.5%, n = 29) was higher than the participation rate of those with above median household income (24.1%, n = 7; see Figure 5.2).

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4 figure labels describe frequency of each bar and internship participation rate within each group.
5 The median annual income of South Carolina comes from Data USA: https://datausa.io/profile/geo/south-carolina#economy.
6 The median annual income of Columbia comes from Data USA: https://datausa.io/profile/geo/columbia-sc-metro-area#economy.

Figure 5.1. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No), by Parental Income (n = 113)*
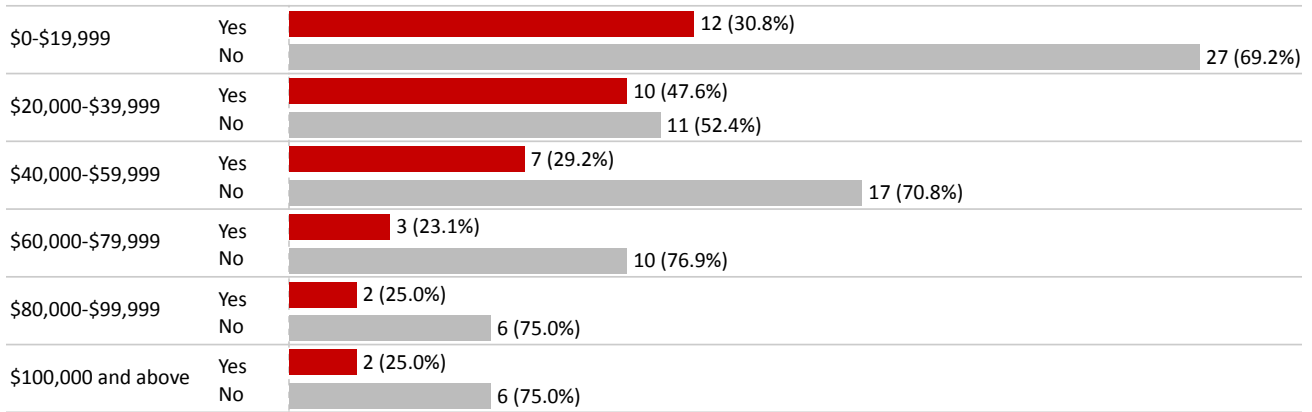
*Note: One participant who did not answer this question was excluded from this figure

Figure 5.2. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No), by Parental Income Below and Above Median Annual Income (n = 113)*
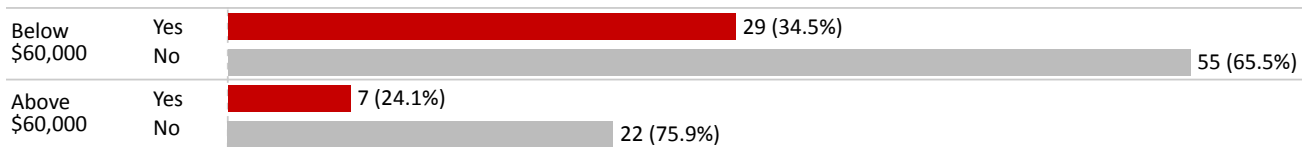

*Note: One participant who did not answer this question was excluded from this figure

Life circumstances and internship participation

Next, research on college affordability and students' basic needs has indicated that issues such as food insecurity, rising costs of college tuition, and related issues have a negative impact on student persistence and achievement (e.g., Maroto, Snelling, & Linck, 2015). To examine these potential constraints we report employment status, reliance on food assistance, and challenges with the cost of housing. In addition, we examine the relationship between these variables and internship participation. Finally, given that several students reported being employed at least part-time, we examined the extent to which students believe that their current job provides them with skills and knowledge that will allow them to be successful in their desired future careers.

Figure 7 displays employment status (FT/PT/Non-Employment) and internship participation. Only 18.8% (n = 3) of students who worked at a full-time job that was not an internship during the last 12 months participated. In contrast, 24.4% (n = 11) students who worked part-time participated in an internship, and students who were not employed had the highest internship participation rate 41.5% (n = 22).

Figure 6. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No) by Employment Status (n = 114)

Full-time employment	Yes	3 (18.8%)
	No	13 (81.3%)
Part-time employment	Yes	11 (24.4%)
	No	34 (75.6%)
No employment	Yes	22 (41.5%)
	No	31 (58.5%)
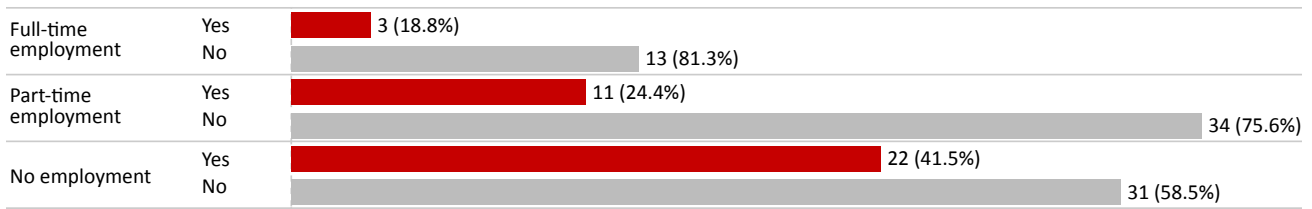
Awareness about college students' challenges with securing adequate food, or what is known as food insecurity, is growing in the US (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016). In our survey, we included a question asking if students had received free food or meals using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or a food bank, and the results indicate that for students who have and who have not had an internship, approximately 13.2% (n = 15) reported relying on these resources in the past 30 days. Among those who did not report food assistance, 29.6% (n = 29) of them reported having participated in an internship (see Figure 7). Given that housing costs can strain a students' financial situation, we also asked about problems with paying rent or mortgages, with 5.3% (n = 6) of students reporting housing cost problems. Among students who did not have trouble paying rent or mortgage, 30.8% (n = 33) of them reported having participated in an internship during the past 12 months (See Figure 8).

Figure 7. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No) by Students Requiring Food Assistance (n = 114)

Yes food assistance	Yes	6 (40.0%)
	No	9 (60.0%)
No food assistance	Yes	30 (30.3%)
	No	69 (69.7%)
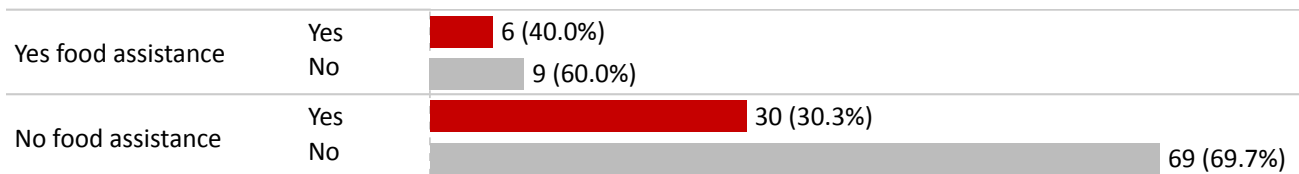
Figure 8. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No) by Students Having Trouble Paying Rent or Mortgage (n = 114)

Not paying rent or mortgage	Yes	2 (33.3%)
	No	4 (66.7%)
Paying rent or mortgage	Yes	34 (31.5%)
	No	74 (68.5%)
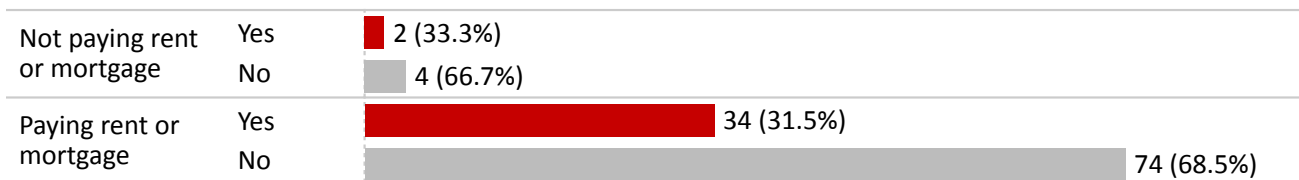
Given that many students reported working part- or full-time, we explored the extent to which they perceived their job as contributing to their career goals (see Figure 9). The results indicate that 39.3% (n = 24) of the students with a non-internship job felt that their main job was providing important career-related skills very well or extremely well. In contrast, 31% (n = 19) of the students reported that their main job provided them with important skills a little well or not at all well. These data suggest that converting FT/PT jobs into internships would not work very well for this population.

Figure 9. How well do you think that your main job provides you with important work-related skills, knowledge, and abilities that you will need in your desired career? (n = 61)

Not at all well   8 (13.1%)

A little well   11 (18.0%)

Somewhat well   18 (29.5%)

Very well   16 (26.2%)

Extremely well   8 (13.1%)
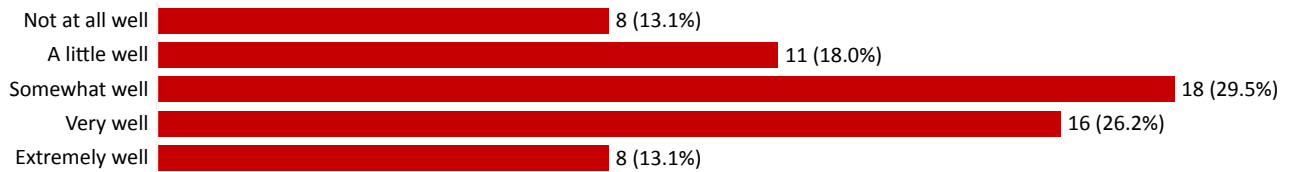
Psychological factors and internship participation

Research in counseling and vocational psychology indicates that psychological factors are related to a variety of career-related outcomes. For instance, career adaptability is a psychosocial resource that facilitates a person's ability to manage career-related tasks and changes (Savickas, 1997). Career adaptability is associated with one's adaptive behaviors (e.g., career planning, career exploration, self-efficacy), employability, vocational self-identity, and satisfaction regarding life, career and school experiences (Rudolph, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017). Scholars argue that career adaptability is especially valuable in the current labor market given frequent job and/ or career changes, rising precarity (and lower job security) of work, and unanticipated shocks to regional and national labor markets that may lead to mass layoffs and forced job and/or career changes (e.g., 2008 recession, COVID-19 pandemic).

In this study, we examined the relationship between career adaptability and internship programs, using a validated career adaptability survey developed by Savickas and Porfelli (2012). These survey items encompass four sub-scales including concern about the future, control over one's future, curiosity about different career options, and confidence to achieve one's goals, each of which are measured by six-items that elicit how strongly the respondent rates themselves on these attributes. These items use a 5-point Likert scale set of response options (1 = not strong; 5 = strongest).

The results indicate that the survey respondents from Benedict College rate themselves relatively high across the career adaptability sub-scales: concern (M = 4.11, SD = 0.68), control (M = 4.13, SD = 0.68), curiosity (M = 3.95, SD = 0.84), and confidence (M = 4.07, SD = 0.77). The mean scores for all sub-scales were similar between the two groups: Concern (Internship: 4.23; No Internship: 4.06) Control (Internship: 4.01; No Internship: 4.19) Curiosity (Internship: 4.06; No Internship: 3.90) Confidence (Internship: 3.97; No Internship: 4.11). None of these differences were found to be statistically significant.[7]

To illustrate the types of questions that are included in the career adaptability survey, we report one example for each sub-scale from the Benedict College dataset (see Figures 10 - 13).

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7 T-test indicated no significant the relationship between the composite career adaptability score and internship participation (concern, p = 0.213; control, p = 0.225; curiosity, p = 0.306; confidence, p = 0.389).
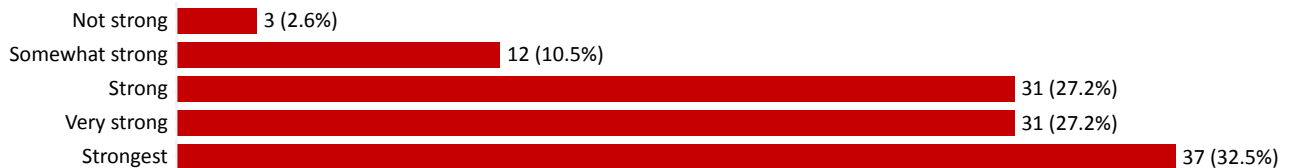
Figure 10. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities: Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make (n = 114)

Not strong	1 (0.9%)
Somewhat strong	5 (4.4%)
Strong	29 (25.4%)
Very strong	40 (35.1%)
Strongest	39 (34.2%)

Figure 11. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities: Taking responsibility for my actions (n = 114)

Somewhat strong	2 (1.8%)
Strong	20 (17.5%)
Strongest	63 (55.3%)
Very strong	29 (25.4%)
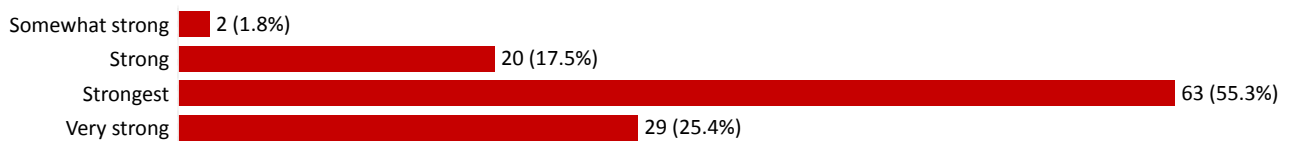
Figure 12. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities: Exploring my surroundings (n = 114)

Not strong	3 (2.6%)
Somewhat strong	12 (10.5%)
Strong	31 (27.2%)
Very strong	31 (27.2%)
Strongest	37 (32.5%)

Figure 13. Please rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities: Performing tasks efficiently (n = 114)

Somewhat strong	8 (7.0%)
Strong	26 (22.8%)
Very strong	37 (32.5%)
Strongest	43 (37.7%)

Features of academic programs and internship participation

It is also possible that some features of a students' academic program and performance (e.g., whether or not an internship is required for graduation, part-time versus full-time enrollment status, disciplinary sector, grade point average) may be related to their participation in internships. Here, we examine the relationship between students' academic programs and students' participation in internship programs.

The results indicate that 85.1% (n = 97) of the respondents were in academic programs that required internships. These students were more likely to participate in an internship as compared to students who were not required to take an internship to graduate (34% vs. 27.3%). There were also six students who were unsure if their program required an internship; these students were less likely to participate in an internship.

Figure 14. Relationship between Internship Participation and whether or not an internship was required to graduate from your academic program (n = 114)

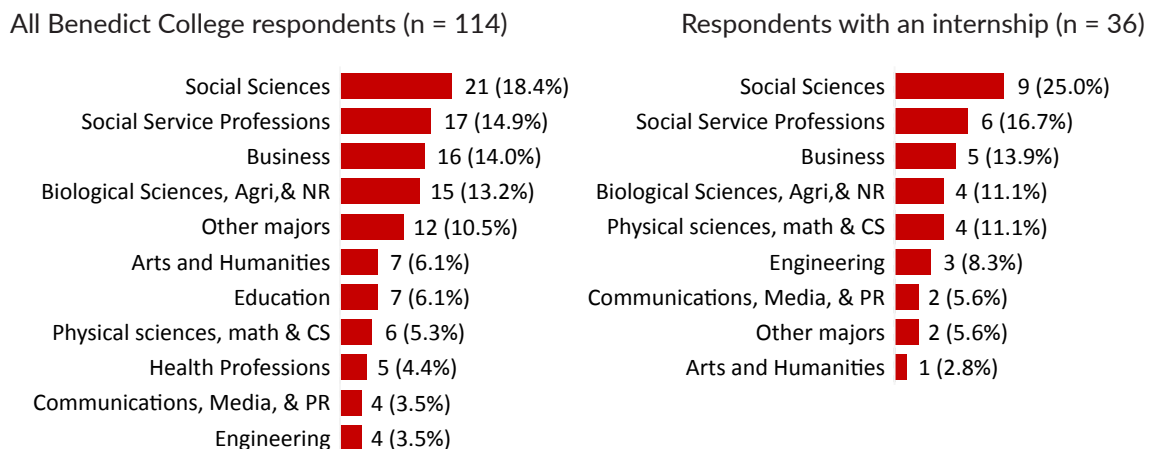|		
Required	Yes	33 (34.0%)
	No	64 (66.0%)
Not required	Yes	3 (27.3%)
	No	8 (72.7%)
Not sure	No	6 (100.0%)

In addition, 98.2% (n = 112) of the 114 survey respondents were full-time students and only 2% (n = 2) were part-time students. Internship participation rate of full-time students (32.1%) was higher than for part-time students (0%). However, due to small number of part-time students, it is not possible to compare the difference statistically.

Figure 15. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No) by Enrollment Status (n = 114)

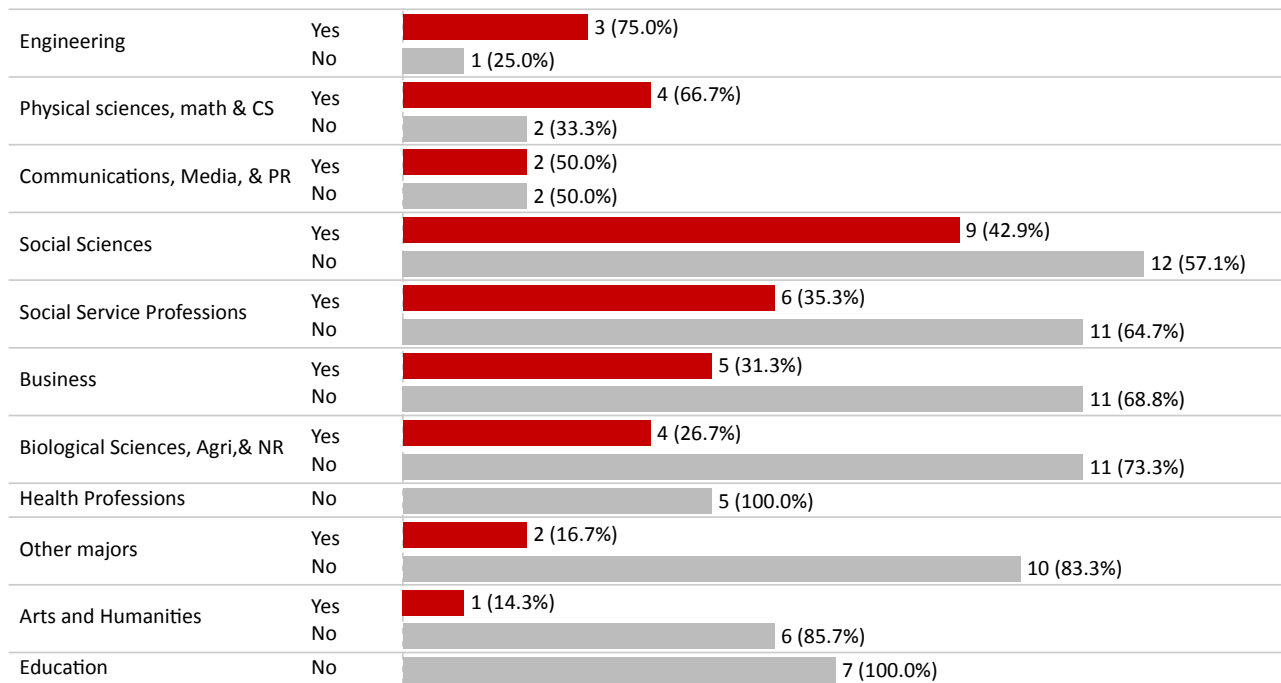|		
Full time, at least 12 credits	Yes	36 (32.1%)
	No	76 (67.9%)
Part-time, less than 12 credits	No	2 (100.0%)

Additionally, we examined internship participation rates by disciplinary sectors. We adopted the major field categories defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2018). Figure 16.1 presents the distribution of eleven majors for all Benedict College participating students (n = 114, left figure) as well as for participating students who participated in an internship (n = 36, right figure). The results indicate that the disciplinary sector with the largest proportion of students was Social Sciences (18.4%, n = 21) and that the disciplinary sector with largest proportion of students who completed an internship is also Social Sciences (25%, n = 9). Figure 16.2 presents internship participation rates across all major disciplines. The results need to be interpreted with caution since the sample size of each major is too small to conclude internship participation difference across majors.

Figure 16.1. Internship in the Past 12 Months (Yes/No) by Program Disciplinary Sector

All Benedict College respondents (n = 114)

Social Sciences	21 (18.4%)
Social Service Professions	17 (14.9%)
Business	16 (14.0%)
Biological Sciences, Agri,& NR	15 (13.2%)
Other majors	12 (10.5%)
Arts and Humanities	7 (6.1%)
Education	7 (6.1%)
Physical sciences, math & CS	6 (5.3%)
Health Professions	5 (4.4%)
Communications, Media, & PR	4 (3.5%)
Engineering	4 (3.5%)

Respondents with an internship (n = 36)

Social Sciences	9 (25.0%)
Social Service Professions	6 (16.7%)
Business	5 (13.9%)
Biological Sciences, Agri,& NR	4 (11.1%)
Physical sciences, math & CS	4 (11.1%)
Engineering	3 (8.3%)
Communications, Media, & PR	2 (5.6%)
Other majors	2 (5.6%)
Arts and Humanities	1 (2.8%)

NR = natural resources; CS = computer science; PR = public relations

16.2. Relationship between Internship Participation and Students' Program Sectors (n = 114)

Engineering	Yes	3 (75.0%)
	No	1 (25.0%)
Physical sciences, math & CS	Yes	4 (66.7%)
	No	2 (33.3%)
Communications, Media, & PR	Yes	2 (50.0%)
	No	2 (50.0%)
Social Sciences	Yes	9 (42.9%)
	No	12 (57.1%)
Social Service Professions	Yes	6 (35.3%)
	No	11 (64.7%)
Business	Yes	5 (31.3%)
	No	11 (68.8%)
Biological Sciences, Agri,& NR	Yes	4 (26.7%)
	No	11 (73.3%)
Health Professions	No	5 (100.0%)
Other majors	Yes	2 (16.7%)
	No	10 (83.3%)
Arts and Humanities	Yes	1 (14.3%)
	No	6 (85.7%)
Education	No	7 (100.0%)

Academic performance and internship participation

Finally, we examined the relationship between participating students' grade-point average (GPA) [8] and internship participation. Figure 17 describes internship participation frequency and rate for each GPA level. A Fisher's exact test did not indicate signification association between GPA and one's internship participation.

Figure 17. Relationship between Internship Participation and Students' Grade Point Average (n = 114)

A	Yes	6 (30.0%)
	No	14 (70.0%)
A-	Yes	4 (26.7%)
	No	11 (73.3%)
B+	Yes	6 (24.0%)
	No	19 (76.0%)
B	Yes	8 (47.1%)
	No	9 (52.9%)
B-	Yes	5 (35.7%)
	No	9 (64.3%)
C+	Yes	4 (26.7%)
	No	11 (73.3%)
C and below	Yes	3 (37.5%)
	No	5 (62.5%)

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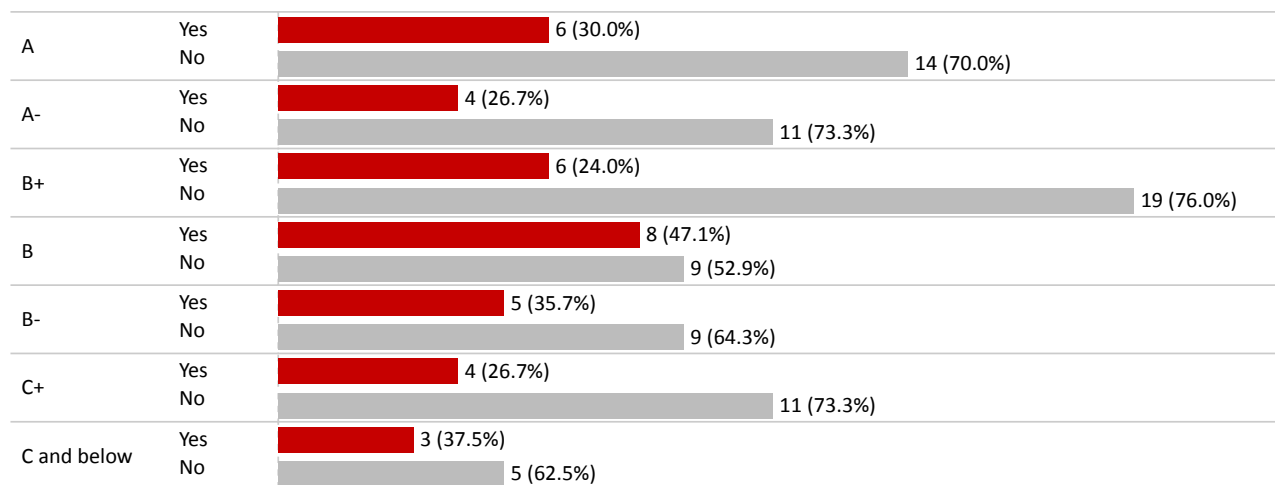
8 The GPA variable in our dataset is a self-reported measure where we asked the student a single question: "Thinking about the past 2018-19 academic year, which of the following best describes your grade point average (10 choices from A to D)?" We then recoded the responses to match standard GPA reporting (i.e., 4.0 = A+/A, 3.7 = A-, 3.3 = B+, 3.0 = B, 2.7 = B-, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0).

VII. RESULTS: Barriers to participation in internships for Benedict College students

In this section we present findings from the online survey and student focus groups regarding barriers to participation in internships for students at Benedict College. Access to internships is a critical issue with respect to the problems of inequality and social mobility facing higher education and society at large. Since internships may provide students with valuable social and cultural capital and enhance their employability in the labor market, these barriers to internship participation are important to consider.

Survey results: How many students wanted to participate in an internship but could not? If not, why not?

For the 78 students who did not participate in an internship, 84.6% (n = 66) of students had wanted to do so (see Figure 18). We asked them to rank the various reasons from most important and least important for not pursuing an internship. Figure 19.1 presents the frequency and percentages of students who cited certain barriers to participation. In general, 66.7% (n = 44) of students reported a heavy course load as a barrier, 51.5% (n = 34) reported their need to work at current job as a barrier, 48.5% (n = 32) reported a lack of internship opportunity as a barrier, 42.4% (n = 28) reported a lack of transportation as a barrier, 31.8% (n = 21) reported insufficient pay offered as a barrier, and 22.7% (n = 15) reported a lack of childcare as a barrier to internship participation.

Figure 18. You indicated that you did not participate in an internship in the past 12 months. In the past 12 months, were you interested in participating in an internship? (n = 78)

Figure 19.1. In the past 12 months, why were you not able to pursue an internship?
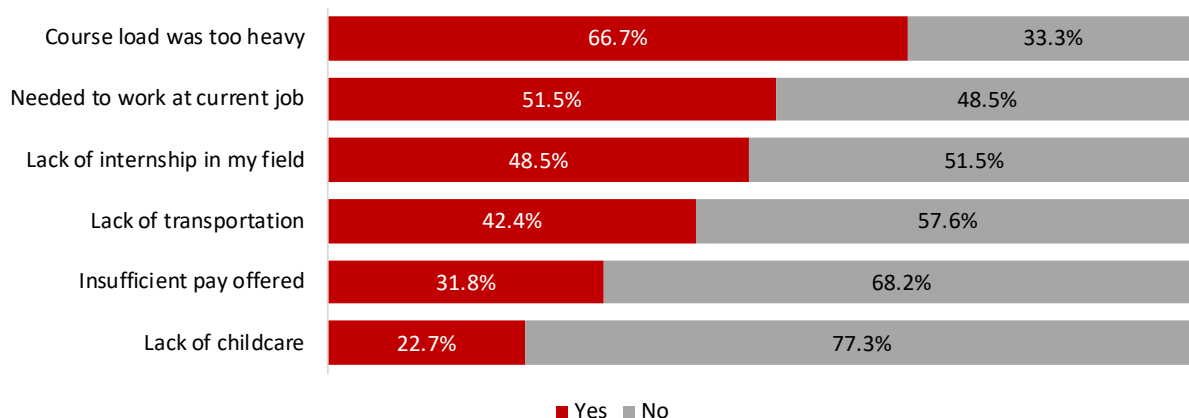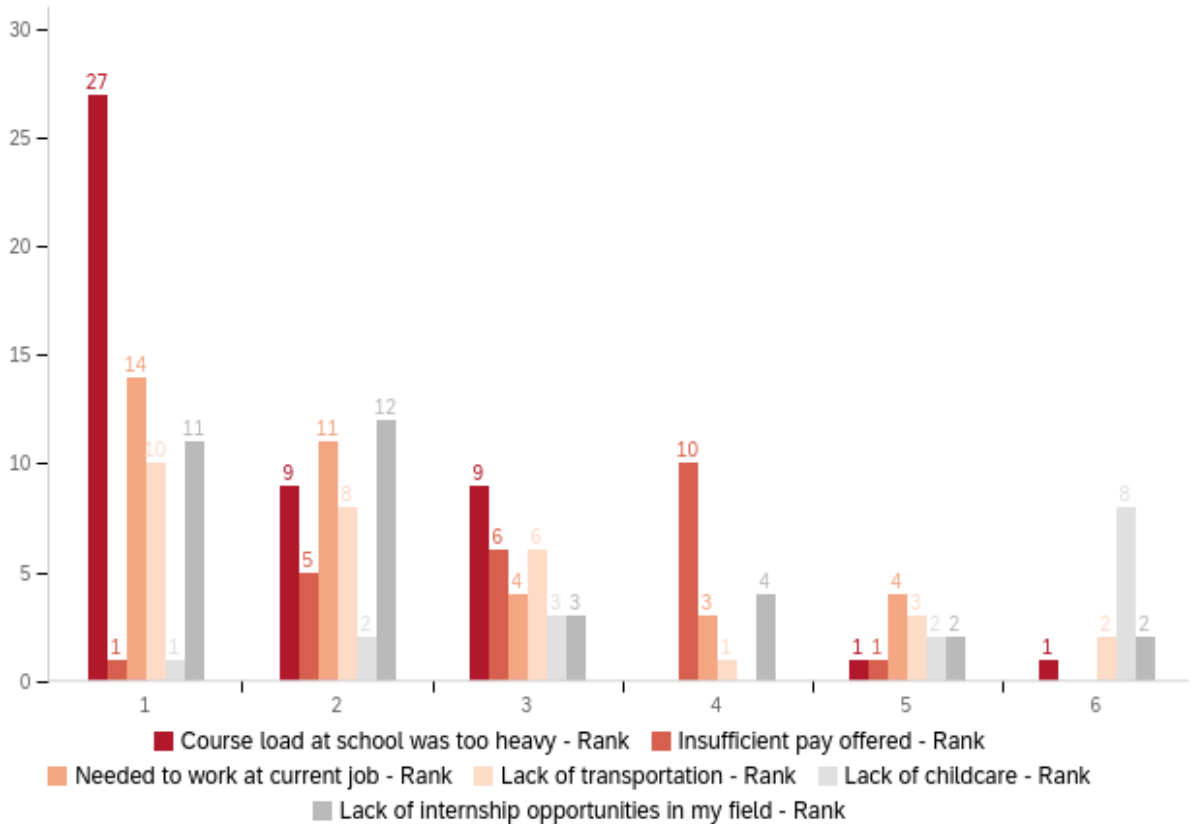

Figure 19.2 shows how students ranked the barriers overall. The reasons that students ranked as the number one important factor influencing their decision not to pursue an internship included: a heavy course load at school (n = 27), their need to work at current job (n = 14), and a lack of internship opportunity (n = 11). The

number two ranked reasons include: a lack of internship opportunity (n = 12), a need to work at current job (n = 11), and a heavy course load (n = 9). Figure 19.2 also presents the third to sixth ranked reasons and their corresponding frequencies. In sum, one's heavy course load, need to work at current job, lack of opportunity in one's field, and insufficient pay were the most common reasons reported by students for not pursuing an internship.

Figure 19.2. Rank the reasons from most important to least important for not pursuing an internship.

Course load at school was too heavy - Rank; Insufficient pay offered - Rank; Needed to work at current job - Rank; Lack of transportation - Rank; Lack of childcare - Rank; Lack of internship opportunities in my field - Rank

Focus Group Themes: What concerns and difficulties do students describe as impacting their decisions about whether to participate in internships

Data from student focus groups with 14 students at Benedict College helped to further illuminate some of the concerns and issues that students consider when deciding whether to pursue an internship. Students discussed several barriers to their participation in internships, including concerns with the application process, company bias and perceptions of their school, transportation challenges, and a lack of time because of work or academic obligations. These themes and examples are summarized in Table 4 and elaborated upon in the text that follows.

Table 4. Student Concerns and Difficulties Regarding Participating in Internships (n = 14)

Concern/Difficulty	Examples
Concerns with the application process	*Worries or lack of knowledge about the requirements and steps involved in applying for internships*
Company bias and perceptions of school	*Experiences and concerns regarding company perception of school*
Transportation	*Lack of transportation as a barrier to reaching the internship site or applying for internship positions*
Lack of time because of work or academic obligations	*Scheduling difficulties or challenges in balancing multiple responsibilities*

*This sample includes all focus group participants from Benedict College; these difficulties include those that were discussed most frequency, in descending order of frequency

During the focus groups at Benedict College, students expressed a variety of concerns regarding the internship application process. Students were unsure about how to connect with businesses. They further pointed out hurdles regarding application materials and requirements, such as creating a professional resume and concerns about required minimum GPAs. One international student described the difficulty in finding a sponsor for her internship position. Furthermore, juniors were under the impression that many of the internships were only available for seniors. As one student stated, *"The majority of the messages that I have got, they were [for a] senior internship. And I'm a junior, so I wasn't really sure if I could look into that."*

Besides these obstacles in applying for internships, students perceived a bias against Benedict College that they felt might disadvantage their internship search. Students felt this disadvantage in comparison to students from other colleges, especially elite colleges, that are predominately White institutions. One student describes this impression as follows:

> *When most people know that you graduated from Benedict, they feel like you don't have potential. Especially if you're going into, you're working for the Caucasian people, right, you have to put yourself out there and show that you know what you know about. Provide them the information and make them believe that you want to work there; [that] you know what you're talking about.*

Another factor that influenced students' internship choices was the need for transportation to internship sites. Many interviewees disregarded internships that were located out of state or, as a consequence of not having access to a car, sought an internship within walking distance. As one student stated, *"I don't have a problem finding them [internships]. It's like, what she said, the transportation, that's one of the key aspects."*

Balancing work, classes, and other obligations was described as very challenging by many students. Such students described lacking the time needed to do an internship, and in consequence, they preferred to prioritize their classwork. For others, it was logistically difficult to coordinate their class schedule with an internship. Several students stated that, because of the need to earn money, an internship is only an option if it is paid. One student exemplified this pattern:

> *Like, all my classes are stacked up together. And then when I thought – I have been looking at different intern opportunities, but I want a paid internship, [that] is what I really want. And then, since I'm going into the education field, working with that and a school schedule is not working out unless my classes – unless the class schedule changes.*

From among the students who had not had an internship but wanted to, all of these barriers—challenges with the application process, a perception of bias against the school, transportation obstacles, and a lack of time— were cited as factors that influenced these students to self-select not to apply for internship.

VIII. RESULTS: What types of internships are students at Benedict College, and what are their experiences in them?

In this section we present findings regarding the types of internship programs that students at Benedict College have taken, and their experiences during their internships. After describing key features of students' internship programs from the survey data (e.g., organization type, sector, length, compensation), we then report how students described their internship with respect to characteristics that the literature suggests are associated with positive student outcomes and experiences (e.g., supervisor support, task clarity, etc.). Finally, we discuss students' observations about their internship experiences from focus group discussions.

Survey results: Features of internship programs

For the 36 students at Benedict College that had taken an internship in the past year, 16.7% (n=6) of them did so at a for-profit company, with the remainder at government agencies (33.3%, n =12) and non-profit organizations (50%, n=18). Many of these internships were concentrated in fields such as education services (16.7%), professional, scientific, and technical services (13.9%), other services (except public administration) (13.9%), arts, entertainment, and recreation (11.1%), and health care and social assistance (11.1%), etc.

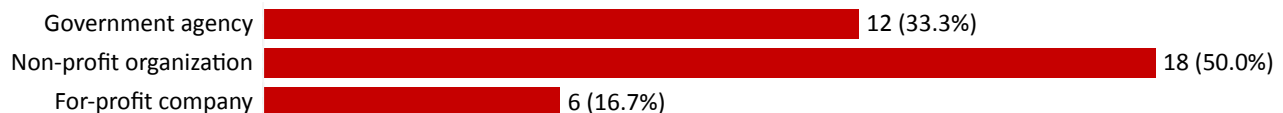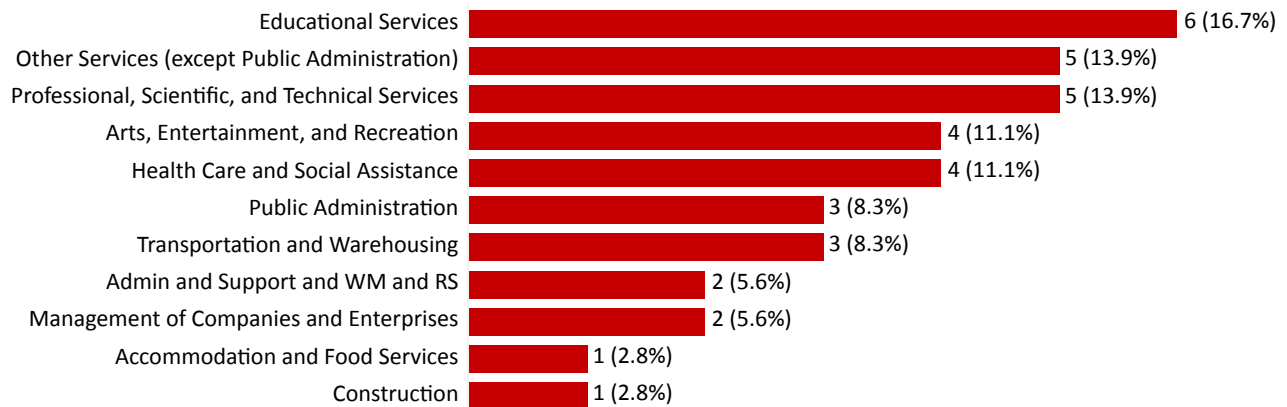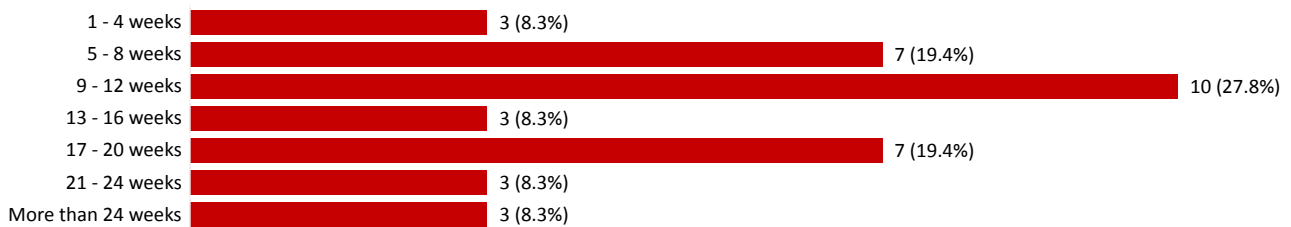**Figure 20. In what type of organization did you participate in this internship? (n = 36)**

Organization type	Count (%)
Government agency	12 (33.3%)
Non-profit organization	18 (50.0%)
For-profit company	6 (16.7%)

Figure 21. In what industry or field was this internship? (n = 36)*

Industry	Value
Educational Services	6 (16.7%)
Other Services (except Public Administration)	5 (13.9%)
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5 (13.9%)
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4 (11.1%)
Health Care and Social Assistance	4 (11.1%)
Public Administration	3 (8.3%)
Transportation and Warehousing	3 (8.3%)
Admin and Support and WM and RS	2 (5.6%)
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2 (5.6%)
Accommodation and Food Services	1 (2.8%)
Construction	1 (2.8%)

*Note: Admin and Support and WM and RS = Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services

In regard to the duration, the survey results indicate that the largest proportion of respondents who had taken an internship did so between 9 to 12 weeks (27.8%, n = 10), followed by those who did internships that lasted between 5-8 weeks (19.4%, n = 7), and 17-20 weeks (19.4%, n = 7) as depicted in Figure 22.

Figure 22. For how many weeks did you participate in this internship? (n = 36)

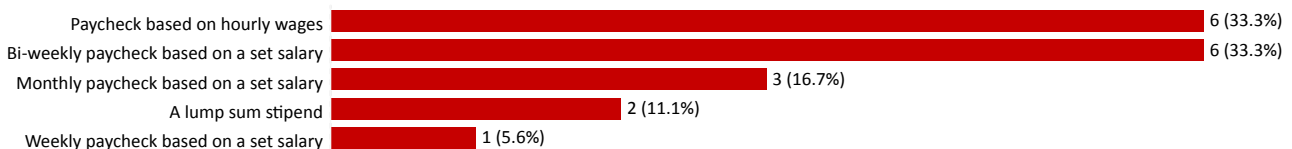| Weeks	Value
1 - 4 weeks	3 (8.3%)
5 - 8 weeks	7 (19.4%)
9 - 12 weeks	10 (27.8%)
13 - 16 weeks	3 (8.3%)
17 - 20 weeks	7 (19.4%)
21 - 24 weeks	3 (8.3%)
More than 24 weeks	3 (8.3%)

With regards to compensation, 50% (n = 18) of these students were compensated for their internship work, whereas 50% were not (see Figure 23). One-third of the students (33.3%, n = 6) were hourly paid and one-third of them (n = 6, 33.3%) were paid bi-weekly. The average hourly payment is $10.13, which is below the estimates of living wages for one adult in Baltimore City ($11.42; MIT Living Wage Calculator, 2018).

Figure 23. Was the internship paid or unpaid? (n = 36)

	Value
Paid	18 (50.0%)
Unpaid	18 (50.0%)

Figure 24. Hourly compensation of internships (n = 18)

	Value
Paycheck based on hourly wages	6 (33.3%)
Bi-weekly paycheck based on a set salary	6 (33.3%)
Monthly paycheck based on a set salary	3 (16.7%)
A lump sum stipend	2 (11.1%)
Weekly paycheck based on a set salary	1 (5.6%)

Survey results: presence of internship characteristics associated with positive student outcomes

Next, we turn to one of the primary research questions driving this study: What is the structure and format of internship programs that Benedict College students are taking? Examining this issue, we focus on features of internships that the research literature suggests are associated with positive student outcomes.

Link between academic program and internship

One of the core principles of experiential education is the integration of academic or theoretical concepts with opportunities to apply new knowledge in hands-on situations. Research on internships also indicates that close coordination between academic coursework and internship experiences is also linked to interns' satisfaction (e.g., Hergert, 2009).

For Benedict College students who participated in an internship, 75% (n = 27) felt that their internship was very or extremely related to their academic coursework (Figure 25). In addition, 75% (n = 27) of the students reported that their academic program staff and internship supervisors cooperated very well or extremely well to ensure this integration (Figure 26).

Figure 25. How related do you feel your internship was to your academic program? (n = 36)
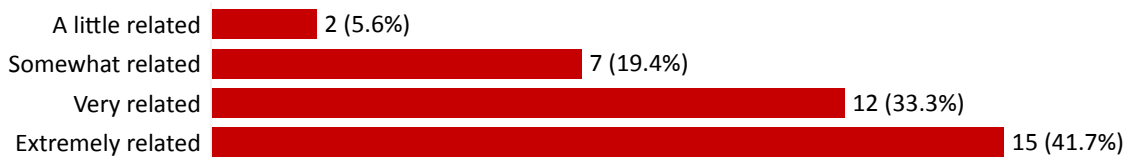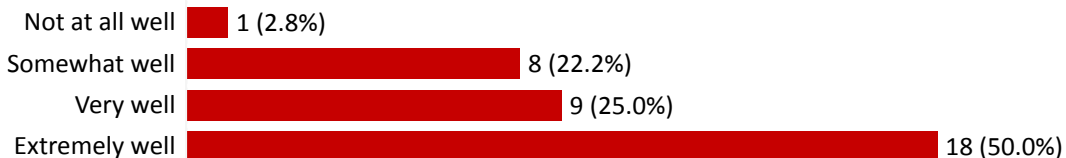
Category	Value
A little related	2 (5.6%)
Somewhat related	7 (19.4%)
Very related	12 (33.3%)
Extremely related	15 (41.7%)

Figure 26. How well did your internship site supervisor and your academic program staff coordinate with one another? (n = 36)

Category	Value
Not at all well	1 (2.8%)
Somewhat well	8 (22.2%)
Very well	9 (25.0%)
Extremely well	18 (50.0%)

Perceived supervisor support

Next, the literature indicates that supervisors' active support of interns' career development and on-the-job satisfaction is strongly associated with positive student outcomes (McHugh, 2017). Students rated four questions regarding how supportive their supervisors were by choosing from 1 = *not at all*, 2 = *a little*, 3 = some, 4 = *quite a bit*, to 5 = *a great deal*. The average score for the four questions equals 4.61 with a standard deviation 0.60. The four questions are: 1) In this internship, how much did your supervisor care about your well-being? 2) In this internship, how much did your supervisor care about your satisfaction at work? 3) In this internship, how much did your supervisor appreciate the amount of effort you made? 4) In this internship, how much respect did you feel you received? Below we report results from two of these items as examples.

Of the Benedict College students who had recently taken an internship, 88.9% (n = 32) reported that their supervisors cared about their satisfaction at work quite a bit or a great deal (see Figure 27), and 94.4% reported that their supervisors appreciated the amount of effort they made *quite a bit* or a *great deal* (see Figure 28). Taken together, these represent important indicators of supervisory support.

Figure 27. In this internship, how much did your supervisor care about your satisfaction at work? (n = 36)

A little   1 (2.8%)
Some   3 (8.3%)
Quite a bit   6 (16.7%)
A great deal   26 (72.2%)

Figure 28. In this internship, how much did your supervisor appreciate the amount of effort you made? (n = 36)

A little   1 (2.8%)
Some   1 (2.8%)
Quite a bit   4 (11.1%)
A great deal   30 (83.3%)

Supervisor mentoring

Another aspect of supervisor behavior found in the literature to be positively associated with intern satisfaction is supervisor mentoring, which pertains to the provision of direction and feedback about task performance and career planning. For the survey, this construct was measured using five questions with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = *never* to 5 = *extremely often*. The average score for the five questions equals 4.20 with a standard deviation 0.80. The five questions are: 1) How often did your supervisor suggest specific strategies for achieving career goals? 2) How often did your supervisor encourage you to try new ways of behaving in the job? 3) How often did your supervisor give you feedback regarding job performance? 4) How often did your supervisor give you assignments that presented opportunities to learn new skills? 5) How often did your supervisor help you finish tasks or meet deadlines that otherwise would have been difficult to complete? Below we report results from two of these items as examples.

Of the 36 Benedict College students who had completed an internship, 69.4% (n = 25) indicated that supervisors encouraged them to try new ways of performing tasks at the internship site sometimes, very often or extremely often. The majority of students indicated that most supervisors provided performance-based feedback; 83.3% (n = 30) indicated they received feedback very often, or extremely often (see Figure 29 and Figure 30).

Figure 29. How often did your supervisor encourage you to try new ways of behaving in the job? (n = 36)
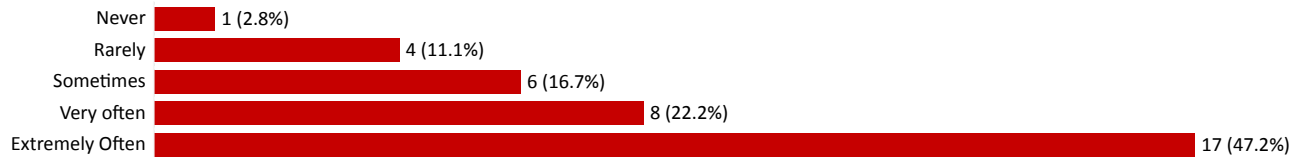
Never	1 (2.8%)
Rarely	4 (11.1%)
Sometimes	6 (16.7%)
Very often	8 (22.2%)
Extremely Often	17 (47.2%)

Figure 30. How often did your supervisor give you feedback regarding job performance (n = 36)

Rarely	2 (5.6%)
Sometimes	4 (11.1%)
Very often	13 (36.1%)
Extremely Often	17 (47.2%)

Goal clarity

Rarely	2 (5.6%)
Sometimes	4 (11.1%)
Very often	13 (36.1%)
Extremely Often	17 (47.2%)

Task goal clarity, or clear expectations regarding work products and their evaluation, is associated with reduced stress and increased satisfaction on the internship site (Beenen & Rousseau, 2010). For example, students who complete internships that are poorly designed and lack meaningful work may end up working on ill-structured and poorly managed tasks (Frenette, 2013). Task goal clarity was measured using two questions with a five-point Likert scale from 1 = *not at all clear*, 2 = *a little clear*, 3 = *somewhat clear*, 4 = *very clear*, to 5 = *extremely clear*. The average score for the two questions is 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.70. Below we report results from these items (see Figure 31 and Figure 32).

The results indicate that 83.3% (n = 30) of participating Benedict College students taking internships felt that they were given very clear or extremely clear tasks to be completed, and 80.5% (n = 29) of students felt the goals to be accomplished were very clear or extremely clear.

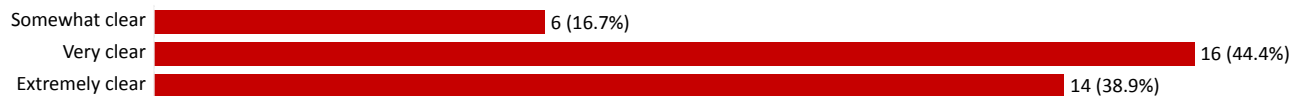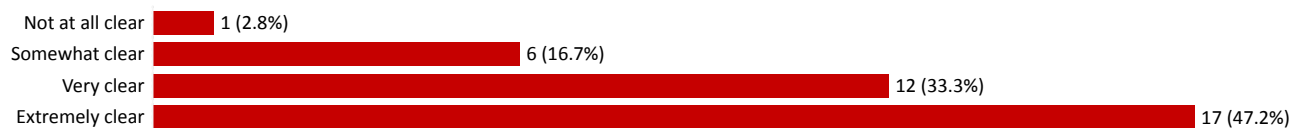**Figure 31. In this internship, how clear you felt about the tasks to be completed? (n = 71)**

Somewhat clear	6 (16.7%)
Very clear	16 (44.4%)
Extremely clear	14 (38.9%)

Figure 32. In this internship, how clear you felt about the goals to be accomplished? (n = 71)

|	
Not at all clear	1 (2.8%)
Somewhat clear	6 (16.7%)
Very clear	12 (33.3%)
Extremely clear	17 (47.2%)

Task autonomy

In addition to benefiting from clearly defined tasks, interns also report higher rates of satisfaction when they are given autonomy and discretion to perform the tasks assigned to them (McHugh, 2017). Task autonomy was measured using two questions with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = none, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = quite a bit, to 5 = a great deal. The average score for the two questions is 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.79, and below we report results for these items (see Figure 33 and Figure 34).

For Benedict College students who participated in our survey, 86.1% (n = 31) reported having considerable flexibility in how they completed their work and 75% (n = 27) reported having much freedom to decide how to do their work, indicating that for these students the internship is an opportunity to function with autonomy in the workplace.

Figure 33. In this internship, how much flexibility did you have in how you completed your work? (n = 36)

A little	1 (2.8%)
Some	4 (11.1%)
Quite a bit	8 (22.2%)
A great deal	23 (63.9%)

Figure 34. In this internship, how much freedom did you have to decide how to do your work? (n = 36)

None	1 (2.8%)
Some	8 (22.2%)
Quite a bit	9 (25.0%)
A great deal	18 (50.0%)
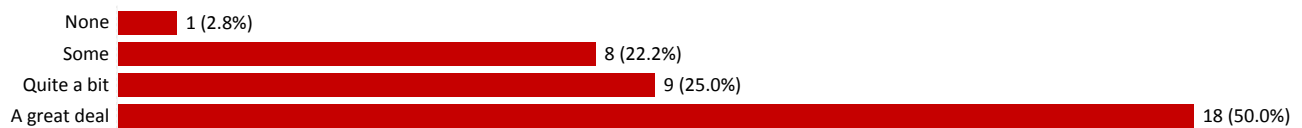
Task similarity to entry-level jobs

One of the persistent questions in the literature is whether interns are provided with work that is of equal difficulty to entry-level employees (Hora, Wolfgram & Thompson, 2017). This construct was measured using one question with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = *not at all similar*, 2 = *a little similar*, 3 = *somewhat similar*, 4 = *very similar*, to 5 = *extremely similar*. The average score for the question is 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.91.

The findings indicate 66.7% (n = 24) of the participating Benedict College students considered their internship tasks were very similar or extremely similar to those in entry level employment. Answers to this question have implications for both compensation and the meaningfulness of the work itself (see Figure 35).

Figure 35. During your internship, how similar in nature were your tasks to those in entry level jobs in the organization? (n = 36)

A little similar	2 (5.6%)
Somewhat similar	10 (27.8%)
Very similar	13 (36.1%)
Extremely similar	11 (30.6%)

Focus group results: What were students' experiences with their internship?

In addition to results from our online survey, we had 4 students in our focus groups who had participated in an internship. The students discussed several aspects of their internship experience, including internship requirements and academic coordination, compensation, supervision, and the relationship between the internship and the student's academic interests and career goals. These themes are summarized in Table 5 and further elaborated upon in the text that follows.

Table 5. Benedict College Student Experiences with Internships (n = 4)*

Internship Characteristics	
Internship requirements and academic coordination	*Internship hours, program requirements, academic credits, coordination with academic staff*
Compensation	*Pay as a factor of the internship experience*
Supervision	*Quality of supervision, mentorship, and feedback, relationship with supervisor*
Relation to academic interests and career goals	*Student related internship experience to his/her goals and interests*
This sample only includes those Benedict College focus group participants who had internships	

At Benedict College, students emphasized internship requirements and coordination with academic staff as especially impactful to their internship experiences. Most students participated in an internship course was required during their senior year, and included resume writing, interview coaching, and regular check-ins with their advisors. The course also shaped their internship plans in terms of timing. Most of the students we interviewed plan to wait until their senior year to take an internship and *"focus on [academic] courses"* before. Several students described positive interactions with their advisors or professors, who provided support during their internships. For example, one student stated:

> *I would check in with my internship professor just to say like hey this is how it's going. And I did that a lot to ask for advice because the professor that I had also worked in graphic design professionally. So, I would ask like hey, how do I, like with my supervisor not giving me the materials I needed. Like how do I handle that professionally and things like that.*

Another key aspect that students share regarding their internship experiences was compensation. Of the four students with internships in our focus groups, most of them were taking unpaid internships but did not see this as a problem, because they were earning course credits and/or gaining experience. One student says the reasons:

> *Really, I'm not thinking about compensation only because it's really towards, again, (...) internship hours. I'm thinking about it like it's another class, so I'm not really interested in the compensation aspect at this moment.*

Furthermore, students' relationships with their supervisors strongly influenced their internship experiences. Beyond receiving tasks and having regular check-ins, many students described their supervisors' role in introducing them to different key skills, such as Javascript or time management, or providing constructive feedback on errors. Among the group of interviewees, most students described a "laid back" relationship with their supervisors, who permitted considerable autonomy in their work. Beyond formal supervision, several students described positive relationships with colleagues or peers at their internship site.

Most students linked their internship to their academic and career interests, with some students directly connecting specific class content to certain tasks (e.g. graphic design). Other students described general learning experiences, that were broadly related to their field of interest. For example, one student found that the motivation techniques she observed at her internship were relatable to her career goals in sports psychology:

> *Watching how instructors interacted with his or her class, because a psychology studies people, so I guess [seeing] ... what methods they used, what words they used, like to get people engaged, get them going. Like getting the mindset to exercise and actually be good.*

Overall, for the students in our study, academic coordination, compensation, supervision, and relationship to academic and career interests, were all important aspects of the internship experience that students foregrounded in the focus groups.

IX. RESULTS: Outcomes of internships

The impacts that internships have on students is an important question facing the field of higher education and workforce development, given the growing push for internships in education policy and programming. In empirical research on internships, this question is examined by tracking changes in variables such as employment status, wages, or vocational self-concept over time. Our research team will be following the panel of students who participated in Time 1 of our study at Benedict College for at least two additional years, with these questions being asked in the Fall of 2020 and 2021.

For this cross-sectional analysis of Time 1 data, we report outcomes in terms of satisfaction with the internship and student perceptions of how well (or poorly) the experience enhanced their knowledge, skills, and career aspirations.

Survey results: Outcomes of internships

Level of satisfaction with internship experience

An important indicator of the usefulness and impact of an internship experience is how students themselves perceive their experience. For this issue we asked a single question about overall satisfaction and students rated themselves from 1 = *not at all satisfied*, 2 = *very satisfied*, 3 = *somewhat satisfied*, 4 = *a little satisfied*, to 5 = *extremely satisfied*. The average score for the question was 4.31 with a standard deviation of 0.89.

Of the students who had completed an internship in this sample, 77.8% (n = 28) reported that they were very or extremely satisfied with their internship experience. The fact that 19.4% (n = 7) were only somewhat satisfied and one student was a little satisfied with their internship indicates that work remains to be done to improve internships for all students (see Figure 36).

Figure 36. How satisfied were you with your internship experience? (n = 36)

A little satisfied	1 (2.8%)
Somewhat satisfied	7 (19.4%)
Very satisfied	8 (22.2%)
Extremely satisfied	20 (55.6%)
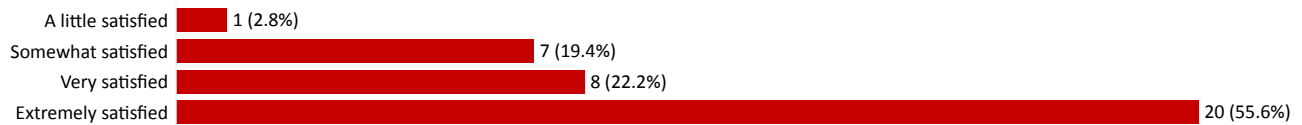
Developmental value of the internship experience

Next, we examine the impact of program structure on another important outcome of internships – students' perception of how much their internship experiences have influenced their academic learning and career development (i.e., developmental value). This Developmental Value scale was developed based on the work by McHugh (2017) and Nghia and Duyen (2019), and consists of 10-items of two subscales using a 5-point scale from 1 = *none*, 2 = *a little*, 3 = *some*, 4 = *quite a bit*, to 5 = *a great deal:* a) 5-items regarding developmental value of academic learning with average score 4.4 and standard deviation of 0.74, Figure 37 and Figure 38 present results from two sample questions of this sub-scale; b) 5-items regarding developmental value on career development with an average score of 4.3 and a standard deviation of 0.77, Figure 39 and Figure 40 present results from two sample questions of this subscale.

For example, the findings indicate 86.1% (n = 31) of the Benedict College participating students considered their internships providing quite a bit or a great deal of opportunities for them to apply knowledge from course work to real-world; and 88.9% (n = 32) reported internships are valuable in terms of providing quite a bit or a great deal of opportunities for them to identify academic knowledge gaps. In addition, when reflecting the value of internship to career development, 91.7% (n = 33) of participating Benedict College students valued the skills they learned at internships are quite a bit or a great deal important for their career development, and 86.1% (n = 31) reported that their internships quite a bit or a great deal helped clarify their career objectives.

Figure 37. The internship gave me opportunities to apply knowledge from my coursework to real-world situations. (n = 36)

A little	2 (5.6%)
Some	3 (8.3%)
Quite a bit	12 (33.3%)
A great deal	19 (52.8%)

Figure 38. The internship gave me opportunities to identify academic knowledge gaps that need to be filled. (n =36)

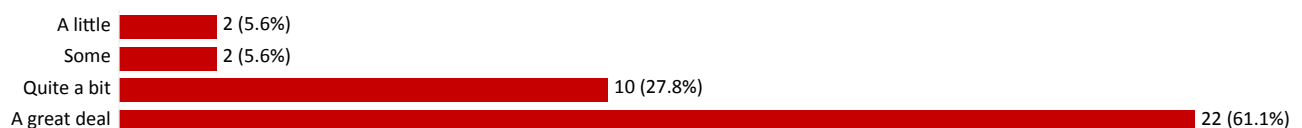|	
A little	2 (5.6%)
Some	2 (5.6%)
Quite a bit	10 (27.8%)
A great deal	22 (61.1%)

Figure 39. The skills I learned at this internship are important for my career development. (n = 36)

None	1 (2.8%)
A little	1 (2.8%)
Some	1 (2.8%)
Quite a bit	10 (27.8%)
A great deal	23 (63.9%)
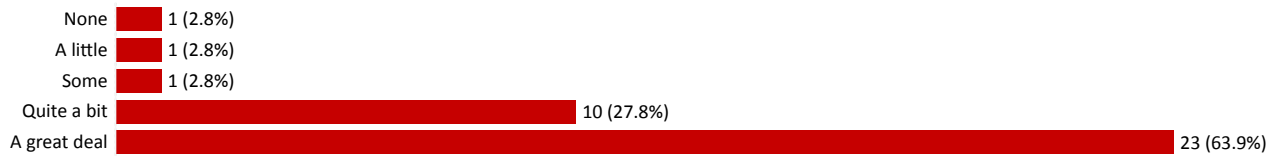
Figure 40. The internship helped me clarify my career objectives. (n = 36)

A little	3 (8.3%)
Some	2 (5.6%)
Quite a bit	10 (27.8%)
A great deal	21 (58.3%)
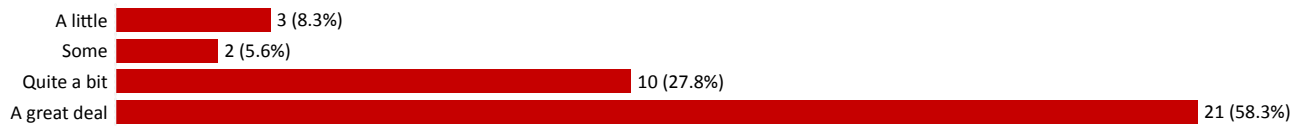
It is worth noting that the current sample size is too small to explore the relationship between internship program features and internship outcomes. In order to examine the relationship between internship program features and students' internship satisfaction or developmental value, future studies will need to collect more data to be able to run a correlation analysis and a multiple linear regression analysis.

Focus group results: Outcomes of internships

There were four students with internships who participated in a focus group. They discussed several outcomes of their internship experience, including how their experience helped with learning and skill development, to explore their career goals, to obtain real-world experience, and to boost their resume. These themes are summarized in Table 6 and further elaborated upon in the text that follows.

Table 6. Perceived Outcomes of Internship Participation Benedict College (n = 4)*

Outcome	Examples
Learning and skill development	*Learning and practicing skills specific to the field or job*
Exploration of field and career goals	*Clarifying or shifting career goals, determining a positive or negative career fit*
Real-world experience	*Applying skills learned in the classroom to the work environment or gaining hands-on experience that is different from a classroom setting.*
Resume boosting	*Including internship on a resume to improving employability*
*This sample only includes those Benedict College focus group participants who had internships.	

During the focus groups, students highlighted a wide range of benefits of having participated in an internship. Most frequently, they described diverse learning experiences and skill development, including both specialized

technical skills (e.g. JavaScript, Adobe Suite) as well as "soft skills", such as time management or professional communication (e.g., "working with difficult people"). One student describes the time management skills he gained as follows:

> It was really nice doing internship because it gave me the experience of having hard deadlines. So, like if I didn't get the ads done that they wanted and the way that they wanted them, then they wouldn't have anything to market that week. So, it was a different experience than in the classroom where if you, like, yeah, if you don't turn something in on time there would be like a grade affected but it's not as real-world as I'm affecting this guy's business because I didn't do my work on time.

Beyond such specific skills, some students even described personal transformational experiences that changed their outlook on themselves and on their own abilities and self-efficacy. One student described how this internship resulted in more "outside the box" thinking about this life:

> And my life is no box. You know what I mean by it's no box? You know, when people think inside and outside the box, it's no box. So, I can do whatever I put my mind to, and I will do whatever I put my mind to.

In addition to gaining transferrable skills, the students also spoke about being able to explore their careers and gain specific insights into their fields. Several students regarded learning about their colleagues' and supervisors' career paths as important to shaping their own goals:

> Pros [of doing an internship] would be like just meeting people that have been in it for a while and just getting to know like their stories and their background stuff, that's very important to like look towards your future and see what you want to do.

Another major theme that students often emphasized was the importance of transferring theoretical course knowledge to an applied "real world" setting. They often saw their internships as unique opportunities to acquire "hands-on" knowledge that could not be taught in a classroom. As one student states:

> Like your professors can lecture you all day long about marketing this, and like financing this, accounting that, but it's nothing like getting a hands-on deal. It gives me a better outlook than just sitting in the four walls of a classroom okay and someone speaking to me about how things should go, when I am learning how things are [actually] going.

For many students, resume building was a key aspect of an internship as it was an important part of their professional development. For example, one student stated:

> Yeah, I would just, I could put it on my resume to say I did it. And I could just have that as like a way to push me forward if I was to move out of state or something like that. I could give them that experience. Then it'll possibly help me find the job in my field.

Overall, the students viewed internships as a highly important – or even essential – credential on their resume. Several students saw an internship as a way to increase their credibility and expand their career opportunities beyond local businesses.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROVIDING EQUITABLE AND HIGH-QUALITY INTERNSHIPS FOR ALL

The literature and the data contained within this report highlight a key issue in the world of internships – that simply making them available does not guarantee that they will be accessible to all students or that the experience is guaranteed to have a strong and positive impact on student outcomes. Instead, much depends on how internships are structured by educators and employers, and experienced by students (Kuh & Kinzie, 2018; O'Neill, 2010). In this final section of our report, we provide recommendations for students, educators, and employers for increasing the availability of high-quality and equitable internship programs for all students at Benedict College.

What can students do?

The literature suggests that students are drivers of their self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management. Interested students often are the ones who must take initiative to actively pursue quality internship experiences, which may serve as important work-based learning opportunities. Research suggests that positive internship experiences can help college students better know their interests, boost skills, and become adaptive to future challenges and changes.

As illustrated by Figures 2-17 there is considerable social-economic variation among the students who completed our survey, including demographic characteristics, life circumstances, and features of their academic programs. Some of these factors may impact students' ability to access an internship experience, such as parental income (Figure 5.2) and employment status (Figure 6).

While numerous individual and structural barriers exist that make engaging in these activities more challenging for particular students, we offer the following suggestions in hopes that they may assist students in accessing, completing, and making the most of an internship experience.

> **What can students do?**
>
> - Actively search for resources, connections, and assistance in their search for and decision-making around the feasibility of internship participation;
> - Work to actively establish effective communication with internship supervisors or mentors;
> - Seek out and participate in professional development opportunities available to them as an intern;
> - Identify short-term and long-term goals before entering internship.

- Students are encouraged to actively seek out resources, connections, and assistance in their search for and decision-making around seeking an internship. This includes utilizing campus resources and asking for support and guidance from faculty, advisors and peers. Basically, students need to be proactive in discovering opportunities and supports available within the Benedict College community, and if these are lacking, to be vocal to their institution that such support is needed.

- Students also are encouraged to consider ways to increase their self-management and time management skills by utilizing campus resources such as attending workshops. Students can utilize these resources to continue to gain and carry forward professional development, learning, and skills from work, coursework, and life experiences they are involved in.

- It is important for students to manage their relationships with internship supervisors or mentors and work to actively establish effective communication. Students are also encouraged to seek out and participate in professional development opportunities available to them as an intern. Although students' internship satisfaction and perceived contributions of internship to their future development could be limited by many contextual factors, students are encouraged to treat internship as an opportunity for personal and professional development, regardless of whether the internship is required or elective.

- Students should articulate their own short-term and long-term goals before entering an internship, and just as important, these goals need to be communicated with their academic program coordinator/faculty and internship site supervisor.

What can faculty and institutions do?

Educators can play a critical role in building the academic foundation for students' future career, by connecting students to educational- and career-related opportunities, and by cultivating students' professional development. Educators can also disseminate information about internships to students, facilitate connections with employers who host internships, and help students to anticipate how their course learning might apply to future internship and work settings.

We offer the following suggestions to strengthen educators' and campus leaders' impacts on student development and to facilitate high quality internship programs at Benedict College:

- Institutional leaders at Benedict College may benefit from carefully scrutinizing the information presented in the institutional capacity for internship programs section of this report. In doing so, educators are encouraged to consider areas that represent strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth. Educators and campus leaders are encouraged to pay close attention to ensuring that issues

What can faculty and institutions do?

- Scrutinize institutional capacity portion of this report and consider areas that represent strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth;
- Understand and advocate for students' needs, especially life circumstances may function as obstacles to participating in an internship;
- Consider ways to maximize opportunities for students to acquire and practice career-relevant skills in their paying jobs;
- Cultivate relationships with employers and maintain connections with former students to build an alumni network;
- Carefully work with students and employers to design, implement, and continuously evaluate students' experiences within the internship program.

related to equitable access and program quality are addressed before expanding or mandating internships for students. For example, some educators at Benedict College discussed their practice of designing internships to accommodate students' limitations on account of a disability or other life circumstances, and we consider this practice of incorporating accommodations within internship design to be a best practice worthy of emulating.

- Educators and institutional leaders are encouraged to recognize their students' needs and life circumstances that may function as obstacles to participating in an internship (see Figures 2-17, 19). For example, educators may benefit from communicating with students who do not participate in internships to understand their reasons, seek resources to resolve obstacles to participating in an internship (if desired), and continue to build on students' work or life experiences that may contribute to their professional and personal development.

- Students perceived a lack of internship opportunities and challenges of finding a relevant internship (Figure 19 and Table 4). Educators and campus leaders can help with such challenges by continuing to cultivate relationships with employers and working with students and employers to increase the link between academic learning and workforce practices. Educators and campus leaders may also benefit from maintaining connections with former students and building an alumni network for the purpose of internship referrals.

- Educators and campus leaders can support desirable internship outcomes by carefully working with students and employers to design, implement, and continuously evaluate students' experiences within the internship program. These efforts will help educators and campus leaders to ensure that quality work, adequate supervision and mentorship, and relevance to the students' academic program are maintained.

What can employers do?

Employers' recruitment, work setting and design, and mentorship and feedback directly impact students' internship experiences and outcomes. Therefore, employers who host internships or who are planning to host internships are encouraged to attend to the following:

- In addition to the labor and recruitment goals that employers may have for their internship programs, internships should primarily be considered as an educational and developmental opportunity for the students. Employers can enhance this opportunity by carefully designing internship programs to include consistent quality supervision and mentorship by the supervisor or by other senior staff in the organization (peer mentorship programs may also be supportive).

What can employers do?

- Carefully design internship programs to include consistent quality supervision and mentorship;
- Allow for some task autonomy for interns while providing clear objectives and explanation;
- Highlight interns' progress and accomplishments, while also provide periodic feedback on growth areas and improvement plans;
- Value interns' efforts and time through providing emotional support and financial support.

- Supervisors are encouraged to allow for some task autonomy for their interns by encouraging their creativity, while providing clear objectives and explanation as well as structured guidance about expectations for interns. It is also important for supervisors to provide periodic feedback to interns that highlight their progress and accomplishments, while also providing clear feedback on growth areas and proposed action plans for improvement. Feedback also can be regularly solicited from interns to assess and evaluate the internship program to optimize learning goals and outcomes. Internship supervisors are encouraged to discuss short- and long-term academic and career related goals with their interns and adjust the internship program when possible to provide experiences that can support those goals.

- Employers also are encouraged to value interns' efforts and time through providing emotional support and financial support, when possible. As many students named financial barriers as a primary obstacle to internship, employers interested in recruiting and attracting more diverse applicant pools may also consider financial compensation as a mechanism to successfully recruit applicants who may not otherwise be able to access and participate in internship experiences (see Table 4).

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APPENDIX

Research Methodology

The College Internship Study is a mixed-methods longitudinal study (Creswell, 2014; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) of internship programs with three distinct yet inter-related components: (1) an online survey of students while in college and then the workforce, (2) focus groups and interviews with students while in college and then at work (3) interviews with career advisors and other educators involved in internship program administration and with area employers who host interns from the college. Primary data is collected in two phases: Fall of 2019 (T1) and then 12 months later in the Fall of 2020 (T2). The study aims to document the effects of internship participation and program characteristics on a variety of student outcomes, group differences (e.g., socio-economic status, race, gender, discipline, and first-generation status) in internship participation and student outcomes, and institutional experiences with hosting and implementing internship programs.

The survey of students and other data collection activities were conducted in Fall 2019; the current report is based on this data. The online survey was administered to students in the second half their degree programs. In order to focus on students' experiences in internships and not on other internship-like programs, data collection for the survey excluded students in programs with a required practicum (e.g., education fields). The definition of the term "internship" that we employed for the survey and other data collection activities was as follows:

> An internship is a position held within an established company or organization while also completing a college degree, certificate, or diploma program. It involves working in a position clearly designated as an "internship" by the host organization, and performing tasks similar in nature and skill-level to tasks done by entry-level employees in the organization.

To participate in the survey, students were contacted with an email recruitment letter, which directed them to a unique password-protected URL. Via the link, the students could review the IRB-approved consent form and signal their consent to participate in the research by entering their full name and birthdate. Students who completed the survey via this link received a cash incentive by mail.

This survey contains questions regarding whether or not a student has participated in an internship in the last 12 months while in college, their employment status, and demographic characteristics. Students who answered "no" to having participated in an internship in the last 12 months while in college also answered questions about their career preparation and any factors that may have dissuaded them from pursuing an internship (e.g., finances, child care), as well as questions that measure their level of career adaptability. For students who answered "yes" to already having participated in an internship while in college, questions were asked about the design features of their internship (e.g., compensation, type of mentoring, job-site activities, etc.), along with questions about demographics, career adaptability, and their satisfaction and perceptions of the developmental value of their internship experience.

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach alpha coefficients of the measuring instruments

	Mean	SD	α
Supervisor support	4.61	0.61	0.82
Supervisor mentoring	4.20	0.80	0.87
Goal clarity	4.22	0.70	0.61
Task autonomy	4.33	0.79	0.72
Relatedness to academic program	4.11	0.92	
Similarity	3.92	0.91	
Satisfaction	4.31	0.89	
Development value – academic learning	4.37	0.74	0.91
Development value – career development	4.35	0.78	0.89
Career adaptability composite	4.07	0.64	0.94
Concern	4.11	0.68	0.81
Control	4.13	0.68	0.85
Curiosity	3.95	0.84	0.88
Confidence	4.07	0.77	0.90

The results of the survey were analyzed using methods such as Pearson Chi-square test, and ordinal logistic regression to explore the effects of demographic background on internship participation. In addition, correlation, simple regression, multiple regression was utilized to explore influential factors on college students' internship satisfaction and development value.

After completing the survey, the students were asked if they were willing to be contacted to participate in an in-person focus group and to be contacted a year later to participate in the follow-up survey. Students who had and had not participated in internships at the time of the T1 survey were asked to participate in the follow-up

survey, thereby constituting distinct groups that can be statistically compared to one another during analysis. Additionally, students who participated in the focus group at T1 will be asked if they can be contacted for a follow-up online or phone interview.

For the focus groups at T1, groups comprised of one to three students were separated into those who have participated in an internship (n = 4, students in 4 groups) and those who have not (n = 10 students in 6 groups). Prior to the start of the focus group, students were given the opportunity to review the IRB-approved consent forms, ask questions, and to voluntarily consent to participate in the research by signing the form. Students received a cash incentive after consenting to participate in the audio-recorded focus group. Focus groups allow for interactions among participants that explore their experiences and thought processes (Kitzinger, 1995). Students who had an internship experience during college answered questions about the nature of their experience, support from both the academic program and their job-site supervisor, their general level of career adaptability, and so on. For those who have not had an internship, questions focused on the reasons why they have not participated in an internship, as well as their level of career adaptability, and so on.

Lastly, we conducted an audio-recorded interview with educators at Benedict College who supports student internships. A list of potential recruits from among the Benedict College staff and area employers was provided by our colleagues at Benedict College. Prior to the start of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to review the IRB-approved consent forms, ask questions, and to voluntarily consent to participate in the research by signing the form. The educator interview focused on the types of resources available for their college and/or company, their views on the sufficiency of these resources, and issues related to designing, managing, and implementing effective programs. Lastly, documents from career services, academic departments, and employers that offer internships themselves, were also collected and analyzed for details about design features of internship opportunities.

Focus groups and interviews were transcribed and analyzed in MaxQDA Software, which is a discourse analysis software for sorting and coding transcript data, and ultimately, to identify themes and patterns in the corpus. First, two researchers created a procedure to segment the interviews based on the interview protocol. Both researchers practiced with the protocol and coded a set of focus groups in parallel; and the few discrepancies that were identified were resolved and the rest of the interviews were coded by the two researchers. Then, the researchers reviewed the corpus of transcripts to identify themes in the data regarding the obstacles to participating internship and the characteristics of internship experience (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The codes developed through this process were checked by the pair of researchers applying them in parallel to a selection of 10% of the transcript data; a few discrepancies were identified and resolved by the researchers, and the codes were then applied by the researchers to the entire corpus.

The limitations of this study are the small sample size of the student focus groups which could not be representative of students from the wide range of academic programs offered at Benedict College. This was also a non-random sample, with students self-selecting into the pool of volunteers who we contacted and tried to schedule for focus groups. Finally, in our study we did not examine whether or not study participants had participated in other work-based learning programs (e.g., apprenticeships), and the potential impacts of these experiences on their learning and career goals.

Note: CCWT staff are available to conduct program evaluations and/or needs assessments of a college or university's internship program such as the one reported here. Our procedures are guided by the rapid ethnographic assessment method and can involve quantitative and qualitative data sources including surveys, document analysis, focus groups and interviews. After analysis, customized technical reports can be provided to institutional partners with actionable recommendations provided regarding how to address challenges and capitalize on program strengths.

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