AIA

HS Internships Guide

June, 2025

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Background

Design and the creative process are central to sparking interest in architecture among both students and faculty. Early exposure through travel, engagement with the arts, and formative experiences—such as visiting significant buildings or observing construction—often serve as influential entry points into the field. However, many aspiring architects face barriers such as limited knowledge of program requirements and concerns about affordability. (Rand Study) These challenges are compounded by demographic trends: according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, the number of high school graduates is projected to decline by 13% by 2041, significantly shrinking the primary college applicant pool. Meanwhile, the architectural field is expected to grow 8% by 2033, with an average of 9,900 new job openings each year (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). With the median age of AIA members at 51 as of 2023, and no increase in youth engagement, the profession faces a looming talent gap.

One way current architects and design professionals can tackle this challenge is by increasing K-12 outreach. AIA's K-12 Pathway Initiatives pursues three key goals: Inspire, Nourish, and Connect. This guide provides a blueprint for creating a high school internship program in your firm or chapter based on successful models across the nation.

Benefits

Supporting high school students through internship programs benefits the student, the mentee(s), and the organization.

Benefits

Benefits to the student	Benefits to the mentor	Benefits to the organization
Receives guidance and support from a design professional	Provides fulfillment and satisfaction in helping others	Facilitates the growth and development of leaders
Builds skills in time management and self-discipline	Provides information to the student to become an informed consumer	Demonstrates commitment to building the future of the profession
Increased knowledge and understanding of what being an architect is all about	Provides practice in leadership, organization, and public speaking	Fosters an inclusive, diverse, and collaborative environment
Increases confidence	Community outreach	
Provides information to make an informed decision about a future career path	Encourages renewed ideas and perspectives	
Builds connections	Builds the architecture pipeline	

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Planning your internship

Step 1: Establish your purpose

Before diving into the details, ask yourself what you as a professional hope to gain from offering a high school internship, how an internship aligns with your organizational goals, and what you hope the student will take away from the experience.

Define your organizational goals	Consider your internship goals	Define your audience
Consider your organization's stated mission, vision, or overall organizational goals. How does a high school internship program align with the organization's overall goals? How do the goals of your high school internship program align with your organization's values, mission, and vision? Consider what consent and liability forms you need in order to host a high school student. Will you be using your organization's created forms or using something the school or outside organization provides? Remember: a professional should never be in a 1 on 1 situation with a student.	Develop objectives, milestones, or indicators to gauge the success of your program: •**Goals**:What is your primary purpose in establishing a high school internship program? (For example, is it an effort to increase diversity within the profession? A community-building exercise? A leadership development program?) •**Timeframe**: How many hours/days/weeks will your internship be offered? •**Participation**: How many students will you support? How will you support your volunteers? •**Funding**: Will you need to raise funds to execute your internship? •**Relevance**: What do the high schoolers selected already know how to do? What do you want them to learn from their experience? •**Impact**: What does your workshop need to accomplish to achieve lasting impact?	Your intended audience plays a critical role as you begin planning your workshop. The format, duration, and impact of the workshop will vary based on the target audience. Consider the following: •**Alignment**:What are the characteristics of the students that align with the goals of your program? •**Target students**: Where can you find these students, are there existing connections? Will you be targeting a specific school, region, or demographic when finding students? •**Background**:What do you expect your student(s) to know pre-internship? •**Interest**:Are you targeting only students already interested in architecture, or hoping to inspire interest in a student who has had no previous experience with architecture?

Step 2: Establish your team

The size of your firm, the number of interested professionals and students, your project load, your budget, and your opportunity for partnerships will all impact the type and length of program you can offer.

Establish your bandwidth	Create your team	Consider a partnership
How many staff members can focus on the internship program? Will this be an approved part of their work day? How many hours can be set aside? What is your budget? (Will you be paying the student or compensating volunteers?).	As you develop your program, consider the following roles and identify team members to help with planning and execution: •**Program Coordinator**: To determine the activities the students will participate in, partnership opportunities, and program logistics including application review. •**Social Media/ Outreach Coordinator**: To create promotional materials and communicate the opportunity to your defined audience. If requiring students to apply, sharing the application with potential students. •**Scheduling Coordinator**: To create the master schedule for the student and the adults who will interact with the student. •**On-site mentor**:Various colleagues who will meet with the student throughout the internship to serve as a mentor. The more colleagues who participate, the greater the experience for the student and less strain on any one adult.	Consider other architecture and design institutions in your area. Would any of them like to coordinate efforts in order to provide students with a more robust experience while simultaneously reducing the effort of each organization? •**Field trip**: Students could spend one day/week on an architecture "field trip." •**Rotate weeks**:Students could rotate firms each week to learn more about the differences between firms. •**Design challenges**:Students could come together once/week or once/internship to participate in a design challenge.

Step 3: Determine the length and structure of your program

Exposing high schoolers to the architecture profession can take many shapes and sizes, ranging from a Shadow Day to a summer internship. Consider the structure that makes the most sense for you and your organization.

Length of program	Structure of program	Learning objectives
Shadow Day: During a Shadow Day, students spend one day shadowing one or multiple architects to gain a sense of the career. This could be the entirety of your program, or it could be offered as an initial way to find a student interested in a longer-term internship. **1-4 weeks:** An organization may find that a commitment of 1-4 weeks is ideal. This could be offered over a school break (e.g., Fall/Winter/Spring break) or during the Summer months. If offered during the school year, this again could be offered as an initial way to find a student interested in a longer-term internship. **Summer-long:** Over the summer break, many students are looking for opportunities to enhance their college resume and provide real-world job experience. One consideration is that students may need to choose between an unpaid internship and a paid job. If your organization is able to offer a paid internship, you will increase your pool of interested students. In some locations, the local workforce development organization may be able to support your efforts to provide a paid internship	Once you have determined the number of days the student will be with you, consider: **Number of hours:** How many hours each day or week the students will be with you. Will it be a set number of hours per day or week? Set days per week? **Activities:** How will you structure the students' time? How much will be spent working directly with adults and how much will be spent working independently? **Schedule:** Sketch out a master schedule for all program participants.	Consider what you expect the students to learn each week, and how you will determine if these goals are being met. Some learning objectives you might consider include: **Design skills:** Drafting and measured drawing Observational sketching Diagrams and graphics Physical modeling Digital modeling Criticism and iteration **Career exploration:** Types of architectural degrees Typical career paths Alternative career paths Adjacent industries Architectural Design phases **Professional skills:** Presentations and public speaking Networking and mentorship Office behavior and habits Independent time management Self-direction and accountability Collaboration Receiving and responding to feedback

Schedule examples

4 weeks, 20 hrs/week, non-billable work only with a focus on industry activities and job shadowing					
	Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
8–8:30am	Prep for week with mentor	Shadow recap	Shadow recap	Architectural building styles research	Sketching to scale
8:30am	Job shadow: Architect	Job Shadow: Interior Designer	Job Shadow: Construction	Revit/BIM modeling activity	Building design activity
11am–12pm	RFI response activity	Organize material library	Jobsite recap	Presentation	EOW notes and check-in

5 weeks, once/week, non-billable work only with a focus on industry activities and job shadowing					
	Week 1	**Week 2**	**Week 3**	**Week 4**	**Week 5**
11:30am–1pm	Meet the other summer interns and members of the chapter for lunch	Guided tour of botanical gardens	Guided tour and presentation on structural engineering	Learn about building scans via a presentation and demonstration by experts	Interns meet with committee members to engage in a design challenge.
1–4pm	Walk downtown and learn about the history of iconic buildings.	Learn about Landscape Architecture by professionals.	Visit a construction jobsite.	Guided tour, presentation, and workshop on Interior Design.	Showcase new skills and refine design concepts with guidance from experienced professionals.

6 weeks, 35 hrs/week; 4 days in-office, 2 mini-courses, 10-12 staff, 10 hrs/week hands-on				
	Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
10-11am	Skills Workshop	Design Discovery	Skills Workshop	Design Discovery	All day experience at partner organization
11am-4pm	Independent Work/ Office Engagement				
4-5pm	Mentor Touchbase				

	Skills Workshop	**Design Discovery**	**Office Engagement**
Week 1	Intro to architectural representation	Schematic Design: Program, Diagram, Site analysis	Field trips/ site visits Lunch with firm leaders
Weeks 2 & 3	Physical modeling Digital modeling	Design Development: Measured drawings, Study models, Digital models	Sketch sessions Integration with college interns
Weeks 4 & 5	Diagrams Presentation skills Model photography	Construction documents: Materials and assemblies, Renders and perspective views, Final model	Attend office events Shadow at internal meetings Present at monthly all-staff
Week 6	Portfolio Development Final Review/ Celebration		

Sample activities

1 Hour
- Sketch sessions
- Architectural building styles research
- Meeting observations
- Presentations
- Lunch with firm leaders
- Physical modeling
- Digital modeling
- Diagramming
- Model photography
- Understanding construction documents
- Schematic design
- Design development
- Site observation and analysis
- Drawing set scavenger hunt
- RFI Response

Half Day
- Design Challenge
- Job Shadowing
- Field trips
- Site visits
- Building design activity
- Revit/BIM modeling activity
- Portfolio development
- Build the Block
- Climate Action Design Challenge
- Office Scavenger Hunt
- Presentations
- Organize the material library
- Orthographic Projection

Full Day
- Field trips
- Site visits
- Partner firm visit
- Job shadow
- Portfolio development
- Design challenge

Resources

1. Firm letter of interest
2. Student application
3. Fellowship overview
4. Fellowship flyer
5. Benefits of "why"
6. Sample planning document
7. Sample info session slide deck
8. Introduction to Architectural Representation Presentation
9. Skills workshop
10. Sample of student work
11. Diagramming
12. Schematic design
13. Site observation and analysis
14. Drawing set scavenger hunt
15. Office scavenger hunt
16. AIA's Design Challenge Guide
17. AIA's K-12 Volunteer Guide
18. ACE Mentor's Summer Work Experience
19. ACE Mentor | Find a Program Near You
20. Hechinger Report
21. AIA Membership Demographics Report
22. Occupation Outlook Handbook
23. Rand Study

Case studies

Payette

Location:: Boston, MA

Firm Size: 180

Years of hosting HS Interns: 5

Voice of: Emily Miyares, Architect

Explain your *why*.

Finding ways to lower barriers to entry into the profession is a worthwhile endeavor, and I'm happy that my firm feels the same way and is financially able to participate in a program like this. I also believe that the program we've developed provides our staff with opportunities to work on teaching skills, mentorship, and organizational skills they may not be getting on their project teams, but to be honest those are secondary benefits.

Vision/Mission of Payette:

We teach, we mentor and we give back to strengthen our firm culture, our profession and our community. We are an *Academic Practice* that engages deeply with the profession and the academy through our uncompromising commitment to design, research, generous investment in people and contributions to the larger discourse on architecture through publications, lectures and exhibitions.

How did your HS internship program get started?

One of our Principals learned about Boston's Mayor's Summer Jobs program and wanted to participate. We hosted our first intern on very short notice in the summer of 2020. The mission of the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program (providing paid opportunities for kids who might otherwise not get access to professional-track summer jobs) aligns well with our firm's commitment to building a diverse talent pipeline in the AEC industry. That first summer it became clear that hosting a high schooler in an architecture firm required a more academic and exploratory model. After a tricky first summer, we decided as a firm to develop a curriculum-based internship for students that would give students an opportunity to explore the education and career pathways of the Architecture profession and set them up with mentors who would support them in whatever their interest might be.

Why did you focus on HS students?

When you're trying to develop a talent pipeline, reaching students early is key! Architecture remains a field with an access and visibility problem - there is not widely available information about Architectural careers in public schools, which means many passionate, talented kids select other paths based on what they are exposed to. What's more, many "professional" internship opportunities for kids this age are unpaid and therefore not feasible for kids who need to generate an income over the summer. Having a program that provides paid professional experiences for high schoolers is a good solution for leveling that playing field--we can provide career exploration.

Planning requirements:

Our internship mentor team is large by design - we don't want any single person to be overburdened by the management and execution of the internship. We do an open call in the office for participants and allow people to engage as much or as little as they can. Typically, we recruit about 10-12 people who want to be involved in some capacity, and about half of those become more deeply involved in the instruction/teaching roles. We also designed a curriculum/program that can be easily replicated every year so we don't have a large workload developing a new syllabus every year. We don't keep detailed records of hours spent on this (we should!), but my target is that 3-4 staff spend about 15hr/ week total on the interns when they're in the office - that's teaching time, follow-up and help, and planning. During the weeks and months before the students arrive, I would say the workload is about 10-15hr/month maximum.

Costs:

We pay $18/hr and offer 35hr/week to students for 6 weeks - that's $3780 in salary direct to the students.

Student schedule:

Our students are in the office 4 days a week, with off-site field trips run by the BSA on Fridays. Each morning they have a 1 hour lesson - they take two mini-courses we designed, one focused on skills and one that's focused on a studio project. During the lesson, they're given something to work on the remainder of the day, with an informal check-in with their instructor around 3pm. The idea is to show them how to work independently for long stretches!

We also schedule a lot of office engagement activities for them - they are invited to all the programming scheduled for our student interns, they have lunches with staff members, site visits, etc. The idea here is to practice time management and multiple obligations.

Goody Clancy

Location: Boston, MA

Firm Size: 82

Years of hosting HS Interns: 8

Voice of: Muna El-Taha, Designer

Explain your why.

The value of education has been embedded in me since I was a child. I've always tutored and mentored younger students, including teaching design studio in graduate school as a teaching assistant. I love teaching design! There's no single "right" answer; it's more about being a guide, helping students find their voice and communicate their ideas. It's an amazing feeling when you see young designers come up with better ideas than you could! It's a great reminder for us, as professionals, to take a step back to the basics and think big again.

This work is about opening doors and helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds feel comfortable in a profession that is still predominantly white and male. I once had a student tell me they were not from the right "background" to be an architect. That broke my heart. We as a profession need to do more than diversity the pipeline--we must help people build their networks early to create spaces where emerging designers can truly see themselves in this field.

Vision/Mission of Goody Clancy

Being an education design firm, it's only natural that we involve ourselves in all aspects of education. In 2013, Goody Clancy became the first design firm to join the Boston Women's Workforce Council, after which we helped other firms join. In 2018, we became Boston's first JUST-certified firm, and this certification helped us ground our social justice and diversity commitments in actionable policies.

Even before partnering with the Private Industry Council (PIC) program, we collaborated with the Boston Society for Architecture (BSA) to work with middle schoolers for 8-10 weeks a year to talk about design. From there, with the BSA's dedication to supporting underrepresented communities in the design pipeline, it was a natural progression for us to deepen our mission through the PIC internship.

Architecture has a real access problem. We saw this as an opportunity to work within our local community to make our office and industry more inclusive of the diverse ethnic and socioeconomic communities we serve.

Brief description of program:

We are lucky to have a smart group of young professionals who developed the outline for what has been our internship schedule model since our earliest years in the program. Our program is built around three pillars: introduction to design fundamentals, developing sketching and communication skills, and real-world project work.

Interns are placed in three project teams, each in different phases of design, to give

them a sense of the full life cycle of an architecture project. We run a 6-week "design crash course" to introduce core concepts and vocabulary. Weekly technical lessons are coordinated with their project work to help build immediately useful skills.

Last year, we had two graduating seniors who were headed to college, one of whom was a returner. We added a personal project component for them, in recognition of each student's personal growth and goals.

How did your HS internship program get started?

We have a pretty special story about how Goody Clancy got involved with high school interns. Though we only focused on education design a few years ago, a commitment to social purpose has always been part of our DNA.

In April 2017, Randolph Meiklejohn, our then Director of Operations, attended a PIC event with the mayor. He recalls that it was a hot day, and the mayor arrived over an hour late—delayed because he'd been downtown where a shooting involving teenagers had just occurred. When he stood on the stage, he posed a powerful question: does anyone need a better argument for the importance of creating positive summer opportunities for students?

When Randolph brought this story back to our president, there was immediate alignment. The initiative matched our values and mission—and that summer, we hosted our first PIC high school interns.

Why did you focus on HS students?

We do have college internships—summer college interns and semester-long co-ops from Northeastern, and Boston Architectural College (BAC) students who work and study part-time. But college kids typically arrive with a clearer career path in architecture and are seeking practical work experience.

High school students, on the other hand, are at a formative stage, still exploring their interests, unsure of what they want to study in college. With high school students, you grab their attention when they're the most open and curious. Architecture has significant barriers to entry. If you look at AIA demographic statistics or even media portrayal of Architects, certain demographics don't get represented at all. Cost is a real barrier too, and many students don't see themselves in the profession. We want to change that.

Our goal isn't just to give students a baseline experience in architecture, but to provide holistic support—conversations about colleagues' college experiences, financial aid, mentorship. We want our interns' experience to be expansive, not limiting—to help them imagine new possibilities and build a network and support to help them in the coming years.

A wonderful benefit, too, is getting to ask students—who are all too familiar with the classrooms and hallways we design, and who can share their generation's experience—to share their thoughts about our design problems. Many of our projects

have been directly shaped by the insights of our PIC interns, from whom we have gained so much.

Planning requirements:

The core team running the summer are three younger staff members who have an interest in teaching. These staff typically rotate every few years to give new staff leadership opportunities. We assign three roles: internal coordination, external coordination, and Design Discovery.

Leading up to the summer, planning typically requires a total of 4-10 hours per week. The bulk of the hours is planning, design discovery, the studio project that we've been doing in recent years, and coordinating with our projects.

During the internship, the core team commits 2-4 weekly, working directly with the students or coordinating with other projects. The project teams and other support people will bill roughly 4 to 8 hours a week for preparing the tasks, meeting with the students, or reviewing work, as well as site visits.

Costs

The salary we offer our interns is $19-20 per hour for a 32-hour workweek, including Friday field trips. Program material costs are minimal--mostly model-making supplies.

Finding students

In Boston, we're very lucky to be working with the city's PIC, which runs the mayor's summer jobs program. The PIC connects us with 3-6 students to interview, then we send offers to the students we would like to hire. We find it is actually easier to have two students than just one, so we look for students who we think will get along. Especially for a high school student who is in an office environment for the first time, it's easier for them to have a peer that they bounce ideas off of or ask questions.

Student schedule

Our current program has evolved since our first interns, but the framework has always remained the same. Interns are in the office Monday through Thursdays, 9 AM to 4 PM. On Fridays, the BSA hosts a field trip for all the Boston area interns.

A typical week includes:

- Design Discovery (an introduction to architecture crash course designed by Jullian Phillips)
- Project team integration and a real-world task
- A small independent studio project
- A technical skill lesson
- A studio check-in
- Portfolio/documentation time

Interns work directly with office staff for a few hours a day for project check-ins or reviews, either with PIC coordinators or project staff. The interns are seated next to each other to foster peer collaboration.

AIA Eastern Oklahoma

Location: Tulsa, OK

Chapter Size: 300

Years of hosting HS Interns: 3

Voices of: Shane D. Aaron, AIA, Partner at Narrate Design/AIA Eastern OK President & Lindsey Ellerbach, AIA Eastern OK Executive Director

Explain your why.

For us as design professionals, to be truly successful, we need to better represent the communities we serve. Our aim is to expand this program to build a pipeline of more diverse voices in architecture in Tulsa.

Brief description of program:

The AIA Eastern Oklahoma Summer Fellowship Program is a 4-week program from June 13 – July 18 (skipping the week of 4th of July) that places incoming 2025 Junior and Senior high school students in architecture firms to learn about the field of architecture and gain a better understanding of the built environment. All participants will be paid $15/hour for 12 hours of work each week on one full workday of your firm's choosing and Friday mornings. Students with an interest in pursuing a career in architecture are encouraged to apply to this program.

How did your HS internship program get started?

Our program started as a DEI effort to get more diverse students interested in the architecture profession in Oklahoma. Initially, we wanted to reach out to college students from outside of the state and bring them into Tulsa, utilizing student housing at a local university. The idea was to provide summer-long internships that would bring interested students from more diverse backgrounds to Tulsa with the hopes of encouraging them to return to the area once they graduated. Upon further reflection, we decided that it would be much more manageable as an organization if we started with high school students who were just getting interested in architecture and design. We also wanted to find ways to include multiple firms in the program, so we elected to make it a short-term program with students working at firms for 16 hours a week and 4 hours of programming all together at AIA for a total of 20 hours. Our AIA Eastern Oklahoma JEDI Committee worked together to create the entire program, with input from participating firm leaders.

Why did you focus on HS students?

By focusing on high school students, we realized that we could open up opportunities to kids as they first start looking at career paths and introduce them to tracks that they might not have known were options. In our program, we try to specifically reach out to demographics that are not well represented in our local architecture communities.

We are establishing a baseline understanding of what it means to be an architect. They don't have a lot of previous knowledge, so a large part of the program is teaching, more than it is utilizing their skills at work, the way college internships operate. There was initially a reluctance from some firms to pay high school students when there wouldn't be any commiserate productivity.

Planning requirements:

We have a committee of 7 people who help put the program together each year. Each firm also sends someone with the student to the AIA program on Friday mornings.

Costs:

The program has progressed since we first started it in 2023. Firms now pay a minimum of $15/hr for 12 hours of work per week for 4 weeks. This includes 8 hours at the firm and 4 hours at AIA. The program costs the local chapter under $1,000. Expenses are mostly for food, supplies, and giveaways.

Finding students:

AIA Eastern Oklahoma utilizes its own and member firms' connections to local schools to distribute the program information and application to prospective participants. Over the three years of hosting this program, we have developed relationships with many school guidance counselors who to actively reach out for updates and strongly encourage their students to apply.

Student schedule:

Students are assigned to participating firms and spend eight hours at their respective offices using learning objectives provided by our JEDI Committee. At the start of the program, specific work days were dictated, but we now give flexibility to firms to work with students to develop their own work schedule to meet the eight hour minimum.

Each Friday during the four week program, the entire group and the JEDI Committee meets for focused learning opportunities including time with consulting professionals, a downtown tour and a tour of a current project in construction.

On the final day of the program, the JEDI Committee hosts a design charrette that serves as a culmination of their four week experience. AIA Eastern Oklahoma board members are also invited to attend to provide feedback.

Stantec

Location: Dallas-Fort Worth, TX

Firm Size: 33K globally; 150 at Plano, TX office

Years of hosting HS Interns: 2

Voice of: Oswaldo Rivera-Ortiz, Associate AIA

Explain your why.

I'm passionate about empowering communities. The best way neighborhoods can thrive, improve, and be more equitable is by sharing knowledge and experiences with those who live there so they can learn about their identity, grow proud of who they are and where they come from, and advocate for themselves. Offering internships, shadowing or office visits, mentoring, apprenticeships, creating or supporting scholarships, grants, etc., all become that empowering mechanism our future 'game-changers' need to transform their neighborhoods. If firms want to retain young talent and invigorate tired or frustrated veterans, they need to offer meaningful work, more than 50+hrs/week of documentation solely for profit. This creates office culture, improves retention, and attracts talent!

Vision/Mission of Stantec:

Connecting students to the profession and professionals to the pipeline, creating a future network for all to grow.

Brief description of program:

We accepted 5-7 students virtually and in-person in the fall semester from 3 public school districts, anywhere from 4 weeks to 5 months, receiving students 2-3 times/week for 2 hrs. each day. Students developed their own project (coordinated with their teachers), researched schools of architecture they are interested in, and took notes from 5-10 speakers (office colleagues offered 15 min+ talks about their fields and background). They presented all 3 pieces at their final jury. This only required my coordination with the teachers throughout the semester, getting the office leadership on board, and managing speakers, critique and jury participants. I average I'd put in 6-8 hours/wk.

How did your HS internship program get started?

After teaching in K-12 for 12 years, including HS courses like Architecture, Interiors, Urban Planning, etc., I went back to the industry and found it easier to create internships connecting current architecture teachers to firms. We accommodated their needs: some HS internships required 2-3 days/wk for 2 hrs+/day, but they could be in-person, hybrid or virtual, as long as there was collaboration with professionals. I managed 5 students from different districts each year using all 3 types of internships, simplifying my job with these projects:

- A competition project the students did not participated in but develop a proposal for (5 months long, from a campus 2 hrs. away, ended with an office visit)
- An old project students didn't get to finish and our job was to support them

with a renewed approach (4 weeks long, ended with an office visit)

- A project we created based on the students' campus, as an addition or renovation to fit new CTE programming (in-person or hybrid, ended with an office presentation

Why did you focus on HS students?

First, long-term recruiting strategy, a lasting effort. HS students barely encounter AEC firms, so having your firm be the only one or one of a few they trust, spreads throughout college and creates the relationship needed when recruiting and retaining.

Second, and more importantly, college is too late to start learning about our field. K-12 offers the time to experience and develop their interest in our field, opening their eyes to the power of design. Too many kids end up in other fields just because they never heard or understood what's there for them in architecture.

Planning requirements:

To coordinate the internships, the first year took about 10 hours total (spread throughout 2-3 weeks), and about 4-6 weeks of planning and feedback, outside of the actual time students were engaged. We already had a one high school student internship program for 9 weeks at a time during the spring semester, targeting a specific client CTE Center. But since our office has the 2 ACE Mentorship chapters in our DFW region, there was 'no need' to build in a bigger push for internships. I got permission to do mine since I did them on my own time and barely incurred any budget needs.

We asked colleagues to volunteer 15-20 minutes of their time to have different talks scheduled for the length of the internship, allowing professionals to give back and the students to get more than only 1 perspective; plus it made my job easier to have that support and it didn't have an hourly cost.

Costs:

The internships I created didn't use any budget since I volunteered my time (6-8 hrs/wk) and the students' final presentation only required in-house items (water, coffee, a snack, etc.) for 2-3 guests (student/s and teacher). We have used a small lunch budget for 'shadowing' opportunities to cover lunch conversations, and when we invited HS students to present their architecture / urban design projects at our office (lunch for 5 students and a teacher). For in-person students they use their school laptop (sketch-up for students or a CTE laptop with Revit) and we used office supplies like markers and sketch paper

Finding students:

In Texas we have a network of high school architecture programs we collaborate with since 2016. We start by asking those teachers if their students are ready to join our internship and offer flexible options to make it happen. I was able to handle 5-7 students at a time on my own, but with more support we could have managed 10-15 easily in virtual, hybrid and in-person versions.

Student schedule:

In the hybrid model, students (and their teacher/s) help develop the schedule: how many weeks, the days and times they are available, and whey they are able to be in-person vs online. I've done 1 month, 9 weeks and 5 month long hybrid internships and students enjoy their 1 or few visits to the office, but also develop their projects and research at their campuses in different cities. It usually runs 2-3 days/wk for 2-3 hrs.

In the office they could get a 15 minute talk by a colleague on a topic related to the project they are developing or any other topic your colleagues want to share. They could get feedback on their progress or instructions on next steps for 10-15 minutes, followed by individual or collaborative time.

Students have 3 tasks: their project created by us in the office or given by their teacher, school of architecture search and comparison table, and presentation/summaries of all the talks and meetings they participate in. They present the 3 as their final jury.

ACE Mentor Program of America | ACE Externship Program

Location: Nationwide

Host firms involved: 700+

Years of hosting HS (Ex)terns: 3

Voices of: Jack Whalen, AIA, South Regional Director and Monica Worheide, Director of National Programs

Explain your why.

Summer work experiences are an essential part of the ACE Mentor program that excite young people about opportunities in the construction space. Each summer, high school students in the ACE Mentor Program are eligible to apply for a work experience with participating firms.

Vision/mission of the ACE Mentor Program:

To engage, excite, and enlighten high school students to pursue careers in architecture, engineering, and construction through mentoring and continued support for their advancement into the industry.

Brief description of ACE:

The ACE Mentor Program of America, founded in 1994, is a no-cost program that prioritizes workforce development for high school students by connecting them with experts from the architecture, construction, and engineering fields. These professionals are brought into the high school classroom to educate and demystify the facets and day-to-day activities of being a professional in their industry. Through mentorship and guidance, high school students learn substantial industry knowledge, allowing them to make informed decisions when looking forward towards post-secondary education and training, saving money, time, and developing professional connections along the way.

Brief description of the ACE Externship Program:

The ACE Externship Program can be deployed in a variety of settings and scales, but is typically a 4-week, part-time paid experience between a host firm and ACE students. Externships differ from the traditional Internship experience as externs typically shadow a professional without completing job-related tasks. In other words, Externships do not work on billable or job-related tasks and receive an "experience" from the host firm to give them an overview of what a career could look like in the industry.

To participate in ACE Externships, interested firms will be connected to their local ACE Program to coordinate the placement of a student. For more information, please contact ACE National: info@acementor.org

How did the ACE externship program get started?

Expanding on ACE's high school Mentorship Program, ACE's Externship program began in 2022 to help feed the AEC workforce pipeline. By giving ACE students professional opportunities in industry, students are significantly more likely to stay on course and enter the profession. Since 2022, the program has over doubled in size and

has been a widespread success.

ACE Nationally awards over 3 million in scholarships to students on an annual basis, and initiatives such as Externships increase the likelihood of those funds impacting our industry. ACE annually evaluates student recruitment and retention efforts and has found a positive correlation between offering professional opportunities and students returning to ACE in the Fall.

·Why did you focus on HS students?

The ACE Externship Program is available to current ACE students and ACE Alumni enrolled in post-secondary education. Through mentoring students in our seasonal programming, we quickly found that many high school students already have exemplary technical and employable skills. This is thanks to ACE students receiving hands on training from professionals on topics such as BIM, building construction methods, project management, and construction administration.

Planning requirements:

In order to have a successful externship program, host firms should reference the ACE Host Firm Guide found on the ACE Summer Work Experiences webpage.

Costs:

The typical hourly rate for ACE Externs is $20/hr. Costs can vary depending on Externship type, length, stipend, and onboarding costs.

Finding students:

Students are sourced via local your local ACE Mentor Program. To find your local program, use the ACE Find a Program Tool under Resources.

Student schedule:

Daily schedules for students usually consist of a morning check-in with their Extern Mentor, design related actives, and a shadow with a professional

Committee members

- Shane Aaron, AIA
- Devon Davis, Sr. Manager, AIA K-12 Initatives & Engagement
- Muna El-Taha, Designer
- Emily Miyares, Architect
- Oswaldo Rivera-Ortiz, Associate AIA
- Jack Whalen, AIA, NCARB