

PRESS RELEASE



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College Professors And Students Intern With Area Businesses

(Abingdon, VA) A number of area business professors are stepping out of the classroom this summer and into the reality of the business world. Professors from Emory and Henry College, Virginia Intermont and University of Virginia Wise are interning at area companies and not-for-profit organizations including Alpha Natural Resources, HAPCO, The Barter Theatre, and World Trade Center. These educators look forward to relating real world business situations to their classroom students. *“My internship is like this wonderful extended field trip. There is a huge difference between studying Accounting in the classroom and then actually seeing how financial data impacts individuals and businesses every day. This real-world experience will definitely impact my teaching and my students will be the ultimate beneficiaries,”* was expressed by Dr. Denise Stanley, Accounting Professor at Emory and Henry College.

Faculty was given this opportunity through a grant funded by the Virginia Tobacco Commission. The funding will provide a stipend to participating faculty with the purpose of helping them stay current on business practices and to create strong linkages between area employers and colleges. Participating area employers are also enthused. Tracy Garcia, Senior Accountant at Alpha Natural Resources, noted, *“This is a winning arrangement for businesses and professors alike. Dr. Stanley’s valuable skill sets have enabled her to assist with a wide range of accounting projects that are essential to Alpha’s continued success. In return, she will be able to take the experiences gained and use them in the classroom to*

influence the next generation of business leaders, many of whom will successfully complete internships or become valuable employees with area businesses.”

In addition, the grant is funding a limited number of student stipends for internships with non-profit organizations. These internships will help business students understand the business world in the non-profit sector and employment opportunities that may exist. Although many non-profit organizations could utilize a student intern, it is difficult to attract students because many times non-profit internships are also non-paid intern positions. *“The grant is giving students the opportunity to be compensated for their internship as well as gain unique experience in the non-profit business world,”* commented Dr. Rachel Fowlkes, Executive Director of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

Internship Virginia offers a web site at www.internshipvirginia.org that provides references of area companies offering internships to college students. Area companies and not-for-profit organizations are welcome to post internships or other part-time jobs that would be of interest to college students.

For more information on Internship Virginia contact Ann Risdon, Internship Virginia Coordinator, at arisdon@swcenter.edu , phone 276-619-4374 or George Hiller, Director of International Business and Education Programs at ghiller@swcenter.edu or visit the web site at www.internshipvirginia.org.

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MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center is to strengthen the regional economy of southwest Virginia by providing higher education and professional development training of the current and future workforce.



Dr. Denise Stanley, Accounting Professor from Emory and Henry College and Tracy Garcia, Senior Accountant of Alpha Natural Resources reviewing an internship project at Alpha Natural Resources, Abingdon, VA.