



# Learning, Growing, and Serving **Outside of the Classroom**

By Chris Lewis '09

Each of us have been blessed with a variety of unique gifts, skills, and talents which we can utilize to improve others' lives, to better society as a whole, and to shape—and change—the world for future generations.

But, how can we fully apply such talents on a daily basis, both within and outside of the greater workforce? How can we be assured that the world's current and future leaders are prepared for long-term, successful careers that will positively impact their respective fields, industries, and communities for years to come?

To educate students for longstanding, active lives of leadership and service, all of Hope's academic departments offer internships—each tailored to the respective program—that enable students to apply the knowledge, life lessons, and expertise they have acquired in the classroom, while also obtaining valuable work experience in the fields they are most passionate about. The experience is especially beneficial for those seeking full-time positions in a competitive job market, but is equally important in a broader sense, helping students determine the paths they'll follow after graduation.

"In this fluctuating economy, internships are almost a necessity," said Sara DeVries, associate director of career services. "Many employers now view their internship programs as primary recruiting tools for entry-level talent while offering full-time, permanent positions to current and former interns before seeking additional candidates."

"Internships provide students with opportunities to observe professionals at work, to ask questions about their fields through informational interviews, and to receive professional networking contacts," DeVries said. "Students are able to acquire hands-on, professional level work experience which will help them 'stand out' as they apply for jobs or graduate schools. Through internships, students can *clarify their callings and affirm their directions for the future.*"

Internships are typically semester- or summer-long, supervised work experiences in professional environments that are highly related to students' majors or career interest areas. Students receive academic credit upon the successful completion of the internship experience, and they may also be paid



Through her externship with Harley-Davidson, Danielle Portfleet '13 visited operations in locales including Miami, Fla.; Nassau, Bahamas; and Milwaukee, Wis.



**Internships and externships provide an invaluable complement to classroom experience. Emily Van Wieren '12 conducted research this summer at the Van Andel Institute in Grand Rapids, Mich.,**

during it. Hope currently offers domestic or international semester-long internship programs in locales ranging from as nearby as Hope's Holland hometown, to Philadelphia, Chicago, Tokyo and Melbourne.

While obtaining real-world experience, students also enroll in courses that complement their temporary positions. The structure varies, from weekly seminars to independent studies, but the emphasis is on providing the opportunity to discuss their internship experiences, understand the ways in which their coursework applies to the tasks and demands of their internships, and implement plans for their future career endeavors.

Emily Van Wieren '12 was among the numerous sophomore-, junior- and senior-level students who participated in internships this summer. A chemistry and biology major from Grand Ledge, Mich., she conducted biological research with the Van Andel Institute (VAI), a leading research organization that focuses on the treatment of various diseases, including cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes.

Van Wieren's internship developed in a rather unique manner. Last October, the college's men's soccer team hosted a Community for a Cure Purple Game to support VAI's cancer research. Some of the proceeds supported the highly competitive, 10-week internship at VAI's headquarters.

Throughout the summer, she met several experts within the science industry, while also discovering which types of careers may best





**through an internship with a unique origin: it was supported through a fund-raiser conducted during a Hope men's soccer game on behalf of cancer research.**

suit her throughout the coming years.

"I was able to gain real world experience and make connections with science professionals who may help me discover new opportunities in the future," Van Wieren said. "Internships are a solid addition to a college education because they not only create opportunities to network with professionals in one's field, but they also allow you to figure out where your passions lie and what potential options are out there in a given career path. It's definitely a great learning experience."

As an accounting major from Chongqing, China, Ziye Liu '12 had the opportunity of a lifetime this summer — to complete a rotational internship program at the headquarters of

Stryker, a leading medical device and equipment manufacturer. The internship allowed her to work at Stryker's corporate accounting office for six weeks and for the organization's medical division for another six weeks.

"This summer I obtained a comprehensive perspective on corporate accounting, which will help me better understand and practice the concepts I learn at Hope — outside of the classroom," Liu said. "My passion for accounting also increased as I networked with numerous accounting professionals and received hands-on experience."

Prior to interning at Spectrum Health, a non-profit health system based in West Michigan, Nathan Love '12, an exercise science major from Midland, Mich., was interested in combining his passion for health with his desire to improve others' lives. Upon completing his internship, Love's aspiration to improve the human condition further amplified.

"My experiences at Spectrum and at Hope have led me to consider joining the Peace Corps after graduating next spring," Love said. "I would love the opportunity to work in the health field, learn and live with people that have different backgrounds than mine, and assist them with the health issues they are presently facing."

He has not only appreciated his internship, but the overall education he has received at Hope as well.

"Hope provides its students with the tools to be successful in and out of college," Love said. "Regardless of what those tools are, students leave with the abilities and desires to create their own paths — and to take their lives to places they never would have originally thought."

As a complement to the decades-long internship program, the Office of Career Services and the college's Alumni Association Board of Directors have developed a new campus-wide externship program that provides

a more tightly focused opportunity for students to explore career paths. Implemented this past May, the two- to five-day-long job shadow experiences pair current students with Hope alumni and other professionals who work in fields that particularly interest them.

Esther Barrett '12, a history and political science double major from Ann Arbor, Mich., externed with Varnum Riddering Schmidt and Howlett LLP, a law firm based in Grand Rapids. The three-day externship was supervised by attorney Tom Kyros '89.

"Esther researched the law related to the interpretation of an ambiguous trust provision. The research was conducted through both traditional library work and online services. The results were very helpful to our client," Kyros said. "She was also able to attend a few meetings with me and network with other legal professionals at Varnum and in the community. Such networking will be invaluable as she looks ahead to life after Hope."

Danielle Portfleet '13, a Spanish and management double major from Coopersville, Mich., externed with American motorcycle manufacturer Harley-Davidson and traveled throughout the country during a week she will remember for the rest of her life.

"First, I traveled to Miami, Fla., to see Harley's Latin American headquarters; Nassau, Bahamas to visit dealerships; and then Milwaukee, Wis., to view the company's North American headquarters," Portfleet said. "I visited multiple dealerships, met with dealers, and toured Harley's manufacturing plant and museum — all within the span of five days!"

The externship was arranged by Mark Van Genderen '90, vice president and managing director, Latin America, Harley-Davidson. As a student at Hope, Van Genderen obtained real-world work experiences while interning during the Chicago Semester. Since his internship had a profound influence on his current career, he was interested in helping present Hope students gain valuable on-the-job experience as well.

"I thought about the increasing importance that international relationships will have on American business ventures in the future and figured if, in some small way, I could expose this to a current student, it would be very beneficial for them," he said.

The knowledge Portfleet acquired while externing will likely influence the remainder of her Hope career — and her future in the "real world."

"The externship provided many life lessons that I will carry with me as I finish my college education and enter the workforce," Portfleet said. "It was an unbelievable, priceless experience." 

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