

Workforce Development Initiative Responds to SAO Members' #1 Priority



By Stephanie Lambert, Manager of Student & Educator Services, Business Education Compact
On February 23, 2006, at a joint meeting of Boards, an innovative partnership between the SAO and Business Education Compact (BEC) was launched. It is called SEED: Seeding the Future Workforce.

SEED—What is it?

SEED is a strategic initiative that addresses SAO member priorities of targeted workforce development and support of quality education (K-20) through student and educator internships. SAO members have clearly stated the need for a highly qualified workforce in order to remain competitive. The BEC internship services made available to SAO members through this partnership will help groom a future workforce to meet that objective. While productive work is accomplished for the organization, student and educator interns gain practical work experience and bring that knowledge back to the classroom to improve learning and skills development.



Tamra Busch-Johnsen, executive director of the Business Education Compact and John Tortorici, president of the Software Association of Oregon

In announcing SEED, the SAO is demonstrating leadership in key initiatives identified by the Oregon Business Plan and Regional Business Plan. By doing so, they are not only supporting their own members, but also modeling behavior beneficial to all industries and clusters.

What the BEC offers

From start to finish, the internship process is made simple through the BEC, which serves as the employer of record. The BEC provides all human resource functions as well as standard employment and payroll services. This includes management reports, worker and unemployment compensation and general liability insurance. Students, educators and customers receive ongoing professional support.

Students are hired year-round, while educators can participate in a summer program specially designed to maximize effectiveness for both business and the educator. (Note: students must be a minimum of 16 years of age to participate.)

Turnkey services provided by the BEC include:

- Assisting hiring organization in work/ project identification
- Recruiting/ matching of qualified candidates to position
- Scheduling interviews
- Screening as applicable (e.g., drugs, DMV checks . . .)
- Developing student learning objectives
- Performing quality checks

Student and educator internships—a proven approach to workforce development

SAO member Intel has plenty of experience investing in a future workforce and contributing to quality education through internships. As a result of its partnership with the BEC since 1993, over 2,000 students and numerous educators have been placed. While the exact numbers aren't known, Intel states that many of these students have gone on to productive careers with the organization.

Through internships, high school students explore career interests and discover the relevance of classroom learning. College students (through post-graduate studies) apply specialized learning to their work environment, hone knowledge and skills, as well as increase their awareness of career options. Whether the student intern is high school or college level, the hiring organization experiences considerable benefit, such as:

- Infusing the organization with fresh perspectives
- Increasing workforce diversity
- Identifying and shaping future workers
- Fostering long-term loyalty
- Supplementing FTEs with a cost-effective solution

Educator interns are an integral part of the SEED initiative. Not only are they highly skilled, they are on the front lines in developing a future workforce in classrooms from kindergarten to post-graduate levels. It is imperative that educators have a first-hand perspective of workforce needs in order to guide the development of future workers. Educator interns offer distinct advantages to the businesses that hire them:

- Highly developed, specialized skills
- Project readiness with minimal supervision requirements
- Highly developed organizational skills
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Real work completed with quality results

Business managers talk about their interns

"John is constantly looking for better ways to do his job and to help others. He has taken the initiative to work across the organization, much beyond the original scope of his work . . . I have received numerous compliments on his dedication, the quality of his work, and high level of customer service." Todd Harrison, Intel Corporation

"Erica represents our CORE Values. She is polite, a fast learner, smart and easy to work with. She asks GREAT questions . . . I really would like to see her become a full-time Providence employee some day." Monica McLeod, Providence Health System

"Kyle is very diligent, puts in the extra mile, and has always gone beyond the call of duty . . . Given an open req, I'd hire Kyle in a heartbeat and fully intend on being one of his best references as he seeks permanent work in the future." Mark Lawler, ProSight

"Our educator interns are inherently hard working and are able to hit the ground running. Our company reaps the benefits of having a competent set of hands (and minds) that make a positive impact on projects . . ." Jeff Banning, Xerox

"It would have taken two consultants at significant cost to perform the work of one skilled teacher intern and without the downstream benefits to students. It is an enriching experience for businesses, schools, teachers, and students!" Maureen Shaw, Portland General Electric

The challenge to SAO members

At the February 23 media event, Greg Drew announced WebTrends' commitment to generate multiple internships within the next 60 days. In his remarks that launched SEED, Greg challenged other member organizations to reap the benefits of paid internships to address their workforce development needs.



Greg Drew CEO of WebTrends and SAO board chairman

Consider how a student or educator intern can make a difference in your organization and contact the BEC. Teachers are making summer plans, so now is the time to start the ball rolling for educator internships.

Learn more about the SEED initiative and the internship services available at www.becpdx.org and follow the "SAO partnership" link. Or contact Stephanie Lambert at 503.646.0242 x23 or slambert@becpdx.org.

About the Business Education Compact

"Make learning real" sums up the BEC mission. For more than 20 years, the local nonprofit organization has been doing just

that by connecting the classroom and workplace with hands-on, innovative learning experiences for students and teachers; by creating and leading working partnerships with business and education; and by advocating for quality education in Oregon. Learn more about the BEC at <http://www.becpdx.org/> or call 503.646.0242 x23.

About the author

Stephanie Lambert is the manager of Student & Educator Services for the BEC, responsible for cultivating internship opportunities through the development of business partnerships. Stephanie's path to the BEC included both business and education experience. After working in various roles for International Gaming Technology, Stephanie pursued a teaching degree. She put her business and marketing background to use during her career as a marketing educator for Everett Public Schools where she developed internships and volunteer opportunities for her students with local businesses. Her passion to make learning real in her classroom led her to the BEC after relocating to the Portland area. Stephanie can be reached at slambert@ecpdx.org.