

Leadership Connection 2018 (15-18 September)

Eta Omega Fosters Leadership Through Intern Program

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Introduction

Each year, the Eta Omega Chapter supports 1 to 2 Leadership Interns who support the President and the Chapter in various assigned capacities. The interns are selected from the most recent induction class and serve the year following their graduation from the undergraduate program. The one-year commitment is rewarded with \$250 to offset the costs of their NCLEX exam.

Purpose

The Leadership Intern program was developed to foster Sigma's ideals of excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service. Selected interns must demonstrate excellent scholarship, have a commitment to service both within the chapter and in outside activities, and have the drive to improve their leadership capabilities. The program utilizes a constellation mentoring model (Norwell, Norris, Mrklas, & White, 2017) to develop new members into active leaders and promote chapter sustainability.

Application process

This year, Eta Omega converted from a Word Document application to a fillable PDF. This increases accessibility and ease of the application process regardless of computer and operating system type.

Applicants must answer four questions assessing their involvement in leadership activities, their leadership qualities, how being an intern will help develop their potential, and their plans to remain an active member of the chapter. Candidates are also required to have references and attach a current resume. Completing the application alone prepares entrants for the job application process.

Selection

Applications are submitted to the Leadership Succession Committee, comprised of Past Presidents of the chapter. The committee reviews the applications for leadership experience and potential and contributions to the chapter. One or two interns are chosen each year and presented to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Responsibilities

New to Eta Omega's Bylaws in 2018, interns are required to attend at least 50% of chapter events or complete a project for the chapter. Chapter events include Board of Director meetings, Induction Ceremonies, philanthropy events, and social events. Projects completed by past interns include the creation of a semi-annual newsletter to the entire chapter and starting a "Welcome Back Bagel Breakfast" for nursing students on the first day of classes.

Four of the interns have attended Sigma's Biennial Convention either during their tenure or directly after. This opportunity has also allowed interns to serve as the chapter's voting delegates, increasing both their responsibilities and experience gained from the role.

Experiences of past and current interns

Past interns felt this was an invaluable experience that provided insight and increased their confidence entering the profession. Interns shared that attending conferences allowed them to network with nurses from Massachusetts and around the world, many of whom they have stayed in touch with since. They have received recommendations for their job search and for graduate school and have used board members as references. Past Interns also stated that members of the Board of Directors have served as mentors as they started their career. Also, serving as a Leadership Intern gave them the confidence to get involved with committees and events at their first jobs such as being part of unit governance. Interns have also realized the importance of Sigma as a professional organization; of the seven previous interns, four currently serve on the Board of Directors of the Eta Omega Chapter.

Conclusion & recommendations

Eta Omega's Leadership Intern program is a valuable part of our chapter experience. The program provides the opportunities for new nurses to gain leadership experience and increase their confidence as they step into their careers. It also has provided the chapter new points of view from a new generation of nurses and added wonderful new programs to the chapter. The intern program has created a bond between new inductees and experienced chapter leaders and has served as a pathway for new members of the Board of Directors.

Recommendations for future internship programs include use of a systematic application system. Our chapter has moved from Word documents to fillable PDFs, but other programs such as Qualtrics and Google Forms have been considered. The responsibilities of the position should be clearly communicated from the onset and requirements set to receive the monetary award. Interns should also be given a direct contact in the chapter to serve as their mentor in the role.

Title:

Eta Omega Fosters Leadership Through Intern Program

Keywords:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

The Leadership Intern Program successfully supports chapter growth, retention, and leadership succession by creating opportunities for new members to get involved with the Eta Omega chapter. Interns attend meetings, conventions, and create new projects for the chapter. This mentorship program fosters leadership skills and professionalism in new nurses.

Content Outline:

I. Introduction

- a. Eta Omega Chapter supports the selection of 1 to 2 leadership interns per academic year that serve the chapter in various assigned capacities
- b. Selected from the most recent induction class and serve the year following their graduation
- c. Each intern receives a \$250 award to support the cost of the NCLEX examination

II. Body

a. Purpose

- i. Foster leadership, scholarship, and service among the chapter's newest members
- ii. Constellation mentoring model to develop future chapter leaders
- iii. Serves as a pathway for new members to the Board of Directors

b. Application Process

- i. Operating system friendly application
- ii. Assess leadership abilities, leadership qualities, potential, plans to remain an active member of the chapter

c. Selection

- i. Leadership Succession Committee selects interns, presents to the Board of Directors for final approval

d. Responsibilities

- i. Required to attend at least 50% of the chapter's programming or complete a project for the chapter
- ii. Four of the past seven interns have attended Biennial Convention and served as voting delegates

e. Experiences of past and current interns

- i. Increased confidence entering the profession
- ii. Networking
- iii. Recommendations and mentoring

III. Conclusion

- a. Provides new nurses with valuable leadership experience
- b. New ideas from new members
- c. Recommendations include computer-friendly applications, clearly delineated roles and responsibilities

First Author

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Professional Experience: 2015-Present -- Nursing Lab Program Manager, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Lowell, MA 2013-2016 Staff RN Neuro ICU, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA 2011-2013, Staff RN Neuro ICU, Tufts Medical Center, Boston, MA 2010-2011, Staff RN Intensive Care, Faxon-St.Luke's Healthcare, New Hartford, NY Responsible for the development and implementation of simulation program to replace 30% of clinical hours (2015 - present) Undergraduate academic advisor (2015 - present) President of Eta Omega Chapter 2017 - 2019 Numerous poster presentations at local and national conferences

Author Summary: Christine Repsha is a family nurse practitioner and the current Nursing Lab Program Manager at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She received her master's degree from UMass Boston and is a current doctoral student at UMass Lowell. After joining the faculty at UMass Lowell, she transferred her Sigma membership to the Eta Omega Chapter and is the current president for the 2017-2019 Biennium.

Second Author

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Professional Experience: Sara graduated with her BSN in 2013. She served as the ETA Omega past president leadership intern for 1 year then joined the Board of Directors as secretary. She is currently working as in staff nurse in the operating room.

Author Summary: Sara graduated with her BSN in 2013. She served as the ETA Omega past president leadership intern for 1 year then joined the Board of Directors as secretary. She is currently working as in staff nurse in the operating room.

Third Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

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Professional Experience: Olivia served as a leadership intern 2017-2018. She has been involved with planning and executing member recruitment and philanthropy events. She now serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Eta Omega Chapter.

Author Summary: Olivia served as a leadership intern for the Eta Omega Chapter 2017-2018 and is now on the Board of Directors. She graduated from UMass Lowell in 2017 and works as a staff nurse on an oncology unit at Mass General. She hopes to pursue graduate studies in nursing education while remaining an active member of her Sigma chapter.