

Office provides opportunities to develop practical knowledge

By Guy Maynard
Of the Emerald

Working as an on-campus intern taught Kathleen Pyfer the skills she needed to do the job she wanted to do.

Pyfer is now corporate training director for the Emporium, and conducts management workshops throughout the Northwest.

"I would not have the job I have right now if I hadn't done the internship," she says.

Pyfer interned as a staff counselor in the Office of Student Services from 1979 until 1981. While in that position, she learned practical applications of the academics taught in the classroom, she says.

"The internship was the most valuable education I received at the University," Pyfer says.

But internships are not the only way University students can build on what they learn in the classroom. Involvement in honoraries, fraternities or sororities and working to help orient new students can also make a student's years on campus more fulfilling, says Jane DeGidio, director of the Office of Student Development.

And active involvement in such programs can help students get jobs after graduation, DeGidio says.

The Office of Student Development was created in January 1983 to integrate programs that contribute to a student's interpersonal, leadership, and career-related skills, she says.

The purpose of honoraries is to recognize students for their academic achievements, leadership or service to the University.

There are 20 different honor societies on campus covering a broad range of achievements and academic areas and participating in many different activities.

Interest in honoraries appears to be increasing, says Hilda Young, coordinator of honoraries for the student development office.

"People want to be involved in something that has a standard of excellence, and in the current job market they are looking for things that makes them a cut above the usual. Some people, I think, just want to be involved with people of like character," Young says.

The office also coordinates new student orientation. Programs sponsored by the orientation office begin fall term and continue throughout the year and are designed to get new students started on the right foot.

During orientation week and the first two weeks of fall term, the New Student Host Program sponsors numerous activities aimed at trying to make new students feel at home on the campus and giving them helpful hints on surviving their first year at the

University.

More than 150 returning students will serve as hosts to the new students this fall. The hosts were recruited spring term last year.

"It's a real big volunteer effort on the part of students. The students who are hosts get really excited about being helpful, and for the new students it's really good to be able to come here and have someone tell you how to go through Mac Court or buy a book," DeGidio says.

The office coordinates another program that allows students to help each other — peer advising. Some 14 University departments now have peer advising — compared to only one in 1976.

Peer advisers are students who are selected by their departments and trained to help other students

with questions and problems about University or department requirements. They serve as a supplement to faculty advisers rather than as a substitute, says Marge Bray, graduate student coordinator for peer advising.

"Peer advising is fun. It offers a chance to be of assistance, an opportunity to benefit from mistakes you have

made so other people don't make them," Bray says. But those receiving advice are not the only ones to benefit from the program. The advisers get valuable training, University credit, professional experience and an important addition to their resume.

In addition to peer advisers, 160 University undergraduates worked in 25 University offices or departments as on-campus interns last year, says Theresa Squires, student co-ordinator for on-campus internships.

As Pyfer found out, internships provide practical learning experiences.

"Interns are given responsibility and duties. They are expected to act like professionals," Squires says.

Most student internships develop from students finding a situation on campus that fits their professional goals. The advisers at the Office of Student Development offer assistance in helping students figuring out what they want and teaching them how to get it.

Involvement in a sorority or fraternity can also enrich a student's time on campus, says Marti Chaney, Greek adviser in the office.

The benefits go beyond the social activities that Greeks are well known for, Chaney says.

Greek leaders learn management skills — some working with budgets up to \$150,000 and coordinating activities and responsibilities in houses with more than 100 residents, she says.

The living environment in a fraternity or sorority can also help students adapt to University life and succeed in their studies, since a higher percentage of Greeks graduate than students at large, Chaney says.

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— Kathleen Pyfer

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