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Clatsop WORKS accepting applications

Paid internship program connects students to employers

Story by Emily LindblomCoast River Business Journal
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Students looking for summer work experience can connect to employers from multiple local industries through Clatsop Community College's Clatsop WORKS Program. High school and college students ages 16 and older can apply now for these paid professional internships.

Ryan Stanley, coordinator of Clatsop WORKS as well as Cooperative Work Experience at the college, said Clatsop WORKS is a low-risk way for students to explore different fields with the option to change their minds about what they want to pursue. For example, one student who planned on going into healthcare ended up doing a social media internship and loved it.

The program also includes six to eight professional development and networking sessions throughout the summer, done over Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders in lumber, manufacturing, personal finance, construction and other industries present about a variety of topics to help students develop their workforce skills.

"I've been here for 10 years and it's hard for students to understand what opportunities are here for them after high school or college," Stanley said. "We're able to fill that void and create that opportunity for students in a way that complements their skills and sets them up for success in their careers and beyond."

Kevin Leahy, director of the Clatsop Community College Small Business Development Center and Clatsop Economic Development Resources, said the area has many more job opportunities than when he was growing up here.

"Unless your parents owned a business or were in government or law enforcement, there were not a lot of career options here," Leahy said. "I've seen how much that has evolved in Clatsop County. We have tourism but also forest products, fishing, medical — a lot of what makes us who we are and we want to transfer that to our youth."

Clatsop WORKS began four years ago and is modeled after the McMinnville WORKS Internship Program, which connects Linfield College students with internships. Leahy said the steering committee decided to open Clatsop WORKS to both high school and college students.

Funding comes from the local school districts, Clatsop Community College and the Northwest Regional Education Services District.

"It continues to grow and gives students opportunities that are unparalleled," Leahy said.

Leahy added the employers have been very engaged in helping the students gain work experience and training, and the employers get a tremendous return on their investment.



COURTESY OF CLATSOP WORKS

Interns tour a Hampton Lumber mill.

Several of the businesses involved in the 2020 program plan to participate again this year.

"When host employers take students on, they get to train and develop them and can hire them when the internship ends or after their high school or college," Stanley said. "We work with as many sectors of the economy as possible to help students find work and also to fill gaps local

businesses are looking for."

Student applications are accepted now through 5 p.m. April 16. One application will connect a student to multiple businesses. The employer application deadline is June 1 and the internships are expected to run from mid-to-late June through mid-August. For more information and to apply, visit clatsopworks.com.



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