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New Web site links college grads, Michigan employers

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The creators of the Web site www.InternInMichigan.com are hoping their new online job service puts a stop to the exodus of Michigan university grads heading outside the state.

The five-month-old Web site helped Kate Musson -- a 20-year-old from Plymouth who earned a degree in marketing and management from Hillsdale College in just three years -- land an internship and a job in her desired locale -- Michigan.

In the midst of a recession, with Michigan leading the nation in unemployment, Musson found an internship on the Web site in May. It turned into a permanent job this summer.



Kate Musson, a Hillsdale College graduate, used the Intern In Michigan Web site to land a marketing job at Southgate Surgery Center.

"My biggest advice to my friends is don't be afraid to take that internship, because you don't know what it's going to open up," said Musson, who considers herself lucky to land a job she loves in her home state. "I definitely wanted to stay local, but if it came down to it, I was definitely open to moving out of state."

Michigan is losing young talent to other states. A 2007 survey of Michigan public university graduates, conducted by Michigan Future Inc., showed that about 50% of graduates left the state.

"There's this perception among students that there are no jobs and no career opportunities in Michigan, which is false," said Brittany Affolter-Caine, the Intern In Michigan program director. "Employers likewise are looking abroad, and they assume we've just been hemorrhaging talent, which we have. But many young people would like to stay in Michigan."

Affolter-Caine (who was an intern at the White House when Bill Clinton was president) said the Detroit Regional Chamber created the site as a one-stop shop to thwart that brain drain.

The service is free to employers, college students and recent graduates. Intern In Michigan received a \$1.2-million grant from Kellogg Foundation to expand its services through 2012.

Since the launch, the Web site has posted 280 internships -- some offering salaries and others offering college credit -- and registered 500 employers and 5,000 students, said Larry Jones, the site's communications coordinator. Currently about 50 internships are available statewide in the coming months.

The site is partnering with organizations and universities to increase its visibility and scope. Internships are available throughout the year. Paul Jaques, an internship developer at Michigan State University, said he's touting the site to MSU students.

Linda Phillips, an administrator at Southgate Surgery Center who used the site to hire Musson, said the process was effective and a timesaver.

"I couldn't hire somebody who had 29 years of experience and would charge me a ton of money," said Phillips.

"I had three really good candidates. Everybody who came to me was qualified to do what I needed to do," she said. "It was a very positive experience for an administrator who doesn't have time to interview 35 people to find out that one good one."

Steve Goldner of Farmington Hills has used interns he found through the Web site to launch Cancer Information Center, a group of electronic magazines that includes www.coloncancerresource.com and www.breastcancerinsight.com.

"This is a fabulous tool," said Goldner.

"In one hour, I was able to scan through it and find 20 people who had the talents and interests to work on our Web cancer publishing company," said Goldner.

A version of this story appears on page 14A of the Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2009, print edition of the Detroit Free Press.

Additional Facts

Jobs and internships

The Web site www.InternInMichigan.com is a free online job service that can unite college students or recent college graduates with potential internships and jobs with Michigan companies. The site was created by the Detroit Regional Chamber, but its reach is statewide.

You don't have to be an in-state student to use the site. You just have to want to work in Michigan.

For internships: Sign up. Create a profile, and detail what you're looking for in an internship. Upload a résumé. Scout out potential internships.

For employers: Available to Michigan companies or nonprofits or companies that have Michigan offices.

Register your company online at the site.

The service allows employers to create a company profile, describing its services and the types of positions they offer.

Recruiters can post internship openings.

Recruiters can then search and scan that database of students to fill intern and job openings.