SUNY Works and the Applied Learning on Campus:
Creating Experiential Opportunities for Students at the State University of New York

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This report was developed on behalf of SUNY Works, which in its second phase consists of nine campuses implementing expansions to applied learning opportunities on their campuses with modest grant funds.[1] The goal of the data collection for the report was to explore any lessons that could be learned from the successes and challenges faced in implementation, to identify effective models that are emerging on the campuses, and to make recommendations for future directions in this area.

The report begins with a brief explanation of applied learning and the various types of activities associated. Next, it provides an overview of applied learning at SUNY, describing its conceptual framework as well as a short summary of applied learning on SUNY campuses, focusing on the Phase II campuses that are a part of SUNY Works. The report then turns attention toward the background and context of SUNY Works, before presenting an analysis of program participant data and highlights from a series of interviews with campus representatives. The report concludes with a discussion of next steps for applied learning, and in particular work-based learning, at SUNY.

Applied Learning

Applied learning has become an increasingly important component of postsecondary education in the United States. Although the concept is not new, there has been renewed interest in these forms of learning given the need to increase the number of highly qualified graduates who have the skills and competencies to prepare them for life after college. The State University of New York (SUNY) system has been committed to increasing the use of applied learning for many years. The goal of this report is to illustrate the breadth of applied learning activities on SUNY campuses, with a special focus on work-based learning under the framework of SUNY Works.

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[1] Phase I campuses received $10,000 each, and Phase II schools received $7,000 each. If a campus was in both rounds, the funding totaled $17,000.

Applied learning, also called experiential learning, has many definitions, but at its core means "learning by doing." For example, such learning can be thought of as:

- "The application of previously learned theory whereby students develop skills and knowledge from direct experiences outside a traditional classroom setting" (Wagner et al 2015 p. 1).

- "A term that applies to many different models of work-integrated learning, including cooperative education (i.e., multiple, alternating periods of work and on-campus learning), internships, service learning, professional practicum, field study and work study" (Desai and Zuber 2014 p. 4).

- "A philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities" (AEE 2015).

Applied learning is based on a set of principles that comprise the foundation for defining and using it to contribute to student experiences. For example, the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) mentions a number of elements that are important for a successful student experience, including experiences that are chosen for their learning potential, active engagement by the learner throughout the process, inclusion of reflection on the learning during and after the experience, and relationships that are developed with other students, faculty, employers, and the broader community. Applied learning experiences are structured so that learners must make decisions and be accountable for results. AEE suggests that the primary roles of educators are to set up suitable experiences for learning, pose problems, set boundaries, support learners, and facilitate the learning process. Another applied learning theory discusses a cycle of learning (Kolb 1984, Indiana University 2006) to describe the process-- knowledge learned through formal education and experience, activity or the practical application of knowledge in a non-classroom setting, and reflection, where the synthesis of knowledge and activity leads to new knowledge.

There are also many different types of activities that come under the umbrella of applied learning (Indiana University 2006, Moore 2010, Center for Teaching and Learning 2015, IUPUI 2015). For example:

- **Internships:** Internships are often a credit-bearing activity in a student's field of study that are usually assessed by a faculty member and supervised by an employer. Internships that are attached to a classroom course often require co-curricular activities, completion of a project, and guided reflection. Students may or may not be paid, be on-campus or off campus, and the work can be full time or part time. There are also many internships that do not involve academic credit, with wide variation in how they are defined and assessed.

- **Service learning:** This includes optional or required out-of-classroom community service projects, which can be attached to courses or stand as a separate competency based, credit bearing experience. Service learning can occur in the broader community or within the university in co-curricular activities. Students participate in an organized service activity that meets community needs and reflect on the activity to improve understanding of course content and civic responsibility.

- **Cooperative education (co-ops):** Special programs offered through a department or school, where students get practical work experience and build career skills over an extended number

of weeks, usually alternating employment away from campus with on-campus study. Alternatively, it can occur simultaneously.

- **Clinical education:** These specifically designed experiences occur most frequently in healthcare or legal settings, where students practice skills under the supervision of a practitioner. It is often a separate course or a culminating experienced that builds on a series of courses.

- **Student teaching:** Specific to students in teacher education who are getting experience in supervised teaching.

- **Practicum:** Similar to an internship, this usually involves practical experience in a work setting as part of professional pre-service education.

- **Undergraduate research experience:** In this experience, students work with faculty on projects and function as research assistants.

- **Community-based research:** Students gain direct experience in research as they collaborate with faculty and local organizations.

- **Field work:** Supervised student research or practice that is conducted away from the university, often in fields such as social work, archeology, and environmental studies.

- **Study abroad:** Students attend courses at a college in another country, often also connect to internships or service learning.

The way that applied learning is structured within a classroom or college can be quite different from one place to another inside the SUNY system. "Applied learning, or developing skills and knowledge from direct experiences outside the classroom, varies widely across university systems, within campuses, and between programs" (Wagner et al 2015, p. v). Experiential educators can be faculty or other instructors, and applied learning can be used in many different disciplines and settings (AEE 2015).

Applied learning is important because it "teaches students the competencies needed for real world success" (Center for Teaching and Learning 2015). It motivates students and provides the optimal conditions to support learning, as well as opportunities for practice and feedback. It creates self-directed learners who can deal with unfamiliar circumstances by reflecting on prior knowledge and using it to develop new knowledge or skills. "Sullivan and Rosin (2008) argue that the mission for higher education should be to bridge the gap between theory and practice and Bass (2012) suggests that to do this, the educational environment needs to intentionally create rich connections between the formal and experiential curriculums."

APPLIED LEARNING AT SUNY

Within this context, SUNY's Chancellor recently stressed the value of ensuring every SUNY student has the opportunity to engage in at least one type of experiential/applied learning activity during his or her academic career, and the 2015/16 New York State Budget included a provision directing the Boards of Trustees of the State University and the City University of New York to develop a plan in collaboration with faculty, students, and other stakeholders. SUNY established a Provost's Advisory Council on Applied Learning in November 2014. The Council has one representative (nominated by president and provost) from every SUNY campus; additionally, a steering committee of faculty and student governance leaders is being established to move the initiative forward. Although

applied learning has been happening on many SUNY campuses for decades, in both formal and informal settings, this initiative creates a common framework for applied learning that includes all activities under the same umbrella.

Applied learning framework at SUNY

SUNY's applied learning activities can be seen as three separate but complementary initiatives:

1. **SUNY Works:** Work-based activities such as cooperative education, internships, work study, and clinical placement. More than 20,000 SUNY students are enrolled in clinical placements, and a similar number participate in internships. About 1,740 students enrolled in cooperative education across the system, where faculty and local employers have jointly developed curricula that integrate classroom instruction with on the job experience (SUNY 2015d). This is important because 95 percent of students who participate in cooperative education nationally find jobs immediately after graduation (SUNY 2015c).

2. **SUNY Serves:** Community-based activities such as service learning, community service, and civic engagement. More than 30,000 students are currently engaged in formal service learning programs for which they earn college credit. Thousands of others volunteer locally (SUNY 2015d).

3. **SUNY Discovers:** Discovery based activities such as research, entrepreneurship, field study, and study abroad. The focus on applied learning has led to increasing levels of collaboration among students, faculty and businesses (SUNY 2015d).

SUNY's applied learning initiative is envisioned as having several phases of implementation, with funding of targeted activities on select campuses followed by a scaling up to all 64 campuses. The initiative is broad in scope, focusing not only on activities but also on baseline concepts, definitions, and ways to assess results. It is also collaborative, bringing together faculty, professional staff, administration, employers, and other stakeholders through a range of venues.

In order to implement the initiative, each campus representative on the Council is developing an applied learning committee on campus to bring together staff and faculty who are involved in the various aspects of applied learning. The committees may also include employers and community-based organizations. The goal of these committees is to think strategically about existing pockets of applied learning on campus as well as identify opportunities to expand or refine those activities. In addition, they aim to generate buy in from the various partners.

The remaining sections of this report focus on nine campuses that were part of Phase II of SUNY Works *(see box on following page),* in order to provide some highlights of the applied learning activities occurring on SUNY campuses broadly as well as the SUNY Works activities in particular. The information is derived from a number of sources, including analysis of data on participation in SUNY Works activities and interviews with representatives from each of the nine campuses.

Phase II Campuses

- Adirondack Community College (at Queensbury)—SUNY Adirondack
- State University of New York at Albany—University at Albany
- Broome Community College (at Binghamton)—SUNY Broome Community College
- State University College at Buffalo—Buffalo State College
- Niagara County Community College (at Sanborn)—NCCC
- State University College at Oneonta—College at Oneonta, SUNY Oneonta
- Orange County Community College (at Middletown)—OCCC, SUNY Orange
- State University College at Oswego—SUNY Oswego, Oswego State
- Rockland Community College (at Suffern)—RCC, SUNY Rockland

Descriptions of the Phase II campuses, derived from interviews, progress reports, and other materials are found throughout the report, to illustrate some of the activities and accomplishments of the work, as well as some challenges they have faced in implementing SUNY Works.

Applied Learning Activities

As noted above, there are many different types of applied learning occurring on SUNY campuses, including at the Phase II schools. The extent of participation varies in terms of both types of activities and number of students participating, but all have significant opportunities for applied learning experiences. The schools vary in their approaches to implementing, coordinating, and tracking these activities, given the unique circumstances and history of applied learning experiences on each campus.

All of the Phase II schools have working teams or advisory committees to support and facilitate applied learning on campus; the way these bodies are structured ranges widely, from college-wide committees, to committees set up for specific types of experiential learning, to coordination within departments. For example, The University at Albany has a Public Engagement Council that worked to define community-engaged courses and a way to identify them in the schedule of classes, while at Orange County Community College (OCC), activities are largely coordinated within departments by an assigned staff member.

Phase II campuses have identified partners for internships, cooperative education, and service learning, often using the Development Center, the Career Development Center, or faculty and departments. Some sites have partners coordinated centrally on campus; for example, for service learning, the Volunteer and Service-Learning Center (VSLC) at Buffalo State hosts community partnership meetings for faculty and partners to discuss connections and develop partnerships. In addition, the VSLC provides one-on-one support for faculty to identify community based projects to meet course learning objectives.

Coordination of various applied learning activities varies across campuses depending on the type of experiences as well as internal processes and policies. Internship programs are frequently decentralized,

coordinated by individual faculty members in different departments, department chairs, or program coordinators for each academic program. However, at SUNY Oswego, credit-bearing internships are coordinated by the Office of Experience Based Education, which has a full time director, and at SUNY Oneonta, there is an overall College Internship Coordinator but also faculty internship coordinators who oversee students enrolled in formal internships. Coordination of activities also varies for cooperative education and service learning; for example, at Broome Community College, co-ops are coordinated through department chairs and coordinators, while SUNY Oswego has a Cooperative Education Office for their multi-departmental co-op program. A faculty member at Adirondack Community College teaches the service learning classes, while at Buffalo State College the VSLC coordinates service-learning by providing faculty, community partner, and student supports.

Most of the Phase II schools have offices on campus that support community service activities. For example, at Adirondack Community College, projects are coordinated and approved by the Student Activities Office, as well as the Community/Wellness committee on campus, while at SUNY Oneonta, the Center for Social Responsibility and Community Office coordinates most of the service on campus. Field experiences and placements for teachers may be coordinated centrally or through relevant faculty. At the University at Albany for example, the Field Experiences are coordinated by the Director of Clinical Training and Field Experience, who assigns and coordinates placements for pre-service teachers and serves as the liaison with teachers and administrators in the schools. At Niagara County Community College (NCCC), on the other hand, a part-time faculty member is assigned the duties of coordinating all field placement activities including obtaining teacher volunteers to host students, working with principals to create schedules, assigning students to clinical experiences, and maintaining field placement records. At Rockland Community College (RCC), agreements are made with the Director of the Campus Fun and Learn Child Development Center through the Chair of teacher education. The Chair also coordinates outside placements in public schools, and conducts onsite observations of all students placed in classrooms. Student research also varies among the Phase II schools. For example, at Adirondack Community College, individual science faculty set up the courses with their students; in comparison, SUNY Oneonta's student research activity is administered and coordinated through the College's Grants Development Office. In addition, there is a College Senate Committee on Research that is charged with student research.

For all of these applied learning activities, the Phase II schools strive to track students and assess their experiences in order to refine and plan for the future. Many of the sites have tracking systems for internships, service learning, and community service, and almost all track students in clinical placements. There are a number of ways colleges are tracking centrally, including the Banner or Simplicity system (SUNY Oneonta, SUNY Oswego, and the University at Albany for one of its colleges), tracking through course registration (NCC), or a centralized location for all data related to activities/placements (RCC). Adirondack Community College uses a combination of the registration/credit hour process and verification by the community partners for its service learning. The University at Albany's Office of Student Involvement and Leadership created a self-reporting tool as part of the My Involvement website and Volunteer UAlbany, an interactive hub for all things related to community service at the University at Albany. At Buffalo State College, the VSLC tracks student participants in VSLC related programs and events; additional information including the number of student volunteers and hours served is submitted to the VSLC annually from other departments. Teacher placements and

clinical placements appear to be tracked in a variety of ways. Buffalo State College and Niagara County Community College maintain a database of student teaching placements in a TaskStream Learning Achievement Tools Field Experience module.

Despite these various mechanisms for tracking applied learning activities, it can be difficult to assess student experiences in a comprehensive way, and there may not be enough resources to support such efforts. More detail on some of the challenges faced by the Phase II institutions—as well as their successes in implementing applied learning activities specific to SUNY Works—can be found in the next section.

SUNY WORKS

SUNY Works, as one component of applied learning at SUNY, focuses on applied work-based learning experiences at the university. The initiative aims to create new and expand existing internship and cooperative education experiences and increase student retention, degree completion, and graduate employment outcomes. It is an ambitious goal, especially since the system included community colleges, technical programs, four-year colleges, and research universities. In addition, although the original goal was to facilitate more experiences in high-need fields such as STEM (Wagner et al 2015), the initiative has since been expanded to all SUNY students.

Overview of SUNY Works

Goals of the Program

The goal of SUNY Works is to expand applied learning opportunities throughout the system, especially internships and coop education, and provide support for students, faculty, and employers. Benefits include shared resources through SUNY Learning Commons, collection of information about employer needs and reforming curriculum to see what works, with requirements for credit hours, pay, goals etc.

SUNY Works was launched in 2012[2] with support from Lumina Foundation and Carnegie Corporation of New York. The overarching goal was to develop a model for internships and cooperative education programs and the infrastructure to support it. Initially, the goal focused on using cooperative education to decrease time to graduation for adult learners (Wagner et al 2015). The first phase included nine SUNY campuses—the Phase I pilot sites—with an additional nine campuses added in subsequent years as the Phase II sites. In total, SUNY aimed to implement a model cooperative education and internship infrastructure across 30 campuses over four years, with the goal of scaling up to all 64 campuses; and an increase the number of adult students who graduate with an associate's degree (Desai and Zuber 2014). Two campuses, The University at Buffalo and SUNY Cobleskill, have been added as the final pilot institutions. Components of programs included formal program assessments, professional development (including professional conferences), incentives for faculty participation, and outreach (such as new marketing materials).

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[2] Initial funding from Lumina began in 2010.

Program Activities

During the first year of the Lumina grant SUNY initiated a number of activities.[3] First, leadership teams were created to develop and implement SUNY Works on campuses. Campuses generally began using funds for professional development and attendance at conferences, outreach and marketing, job bank software, job fairs, and faculty engagement efforts. SUNY also began creating a statewide SUNY Works Network Experiential Education Database for all 64 campuses.

[3] This section is derived from Lumina grant proposals and progress reports.

SUNY Adirondack:
Bringing Faculty and Staff Together to Expand Internship Experiences

Several initiatives are active at Adirondack—SUNY Serves, SUNY Discovers and SUNY Works. Internships, both paid and unpaid, are available in career programs, and community service through courses in the social science division. Other applied learning activities include clinical experiences in nursing and criminal justice-substance abuse programs; participation in the NYS Assembly and Senate internship program; research classes in the science division; field studies for students in early childhood programs; presentations at science symposia; and performances by music students at college events.

The college's internship program, which is the focus of SUNY Works, is small but robust. Staff continually strive to provide students with internship experiences and look for ways to promote internship opportunities to students. Internships are required in all of the career degree programs (Associate in Applied Science, AAS programs). There is no single internship coordinator on campus, or coordinator for applied learning. Rather, faculty are responsible for all of the internship management, from finding the internship opportunities, to managing the internship class when required, and following up with the students throughout the internship experience. Internship classes range widely, from a handful of students to 30–50 students in business programs, and so the faculty load varies.

With the funds from SUNY Works, Adirondack kicked off their work with an experiential learning seminar in August 2013, which included both faculty and college administrators. The seminar was one of the first meetings where people from across the campus engaged in work outside of class came together in one place. It provided a superb opportunity to share the range of applied learning experiences that the college offers to its students, including internships, service learning and scientific research. In addition, it highlighted the need for consistency in internship opportunities to ensure that internships across programs include the same types of experiences.

From this meeting, the group decided to devote the funds to developing some marketing and promotional videos on internships that could be utilized to engage the student body. The videos feature students at their internships, and are geared internships that are part of their AAS degree career programs. They aim to show students the connections between what is taught in courses, development of soft skills, and placement in jobs where they need to use the knowledge and skills in a practical way.

The campus has faced some challenges as well. Faculty members are strained with the management of internships and could use some resources to better achieve more consistent experiences for interns. It would be useful to add someone who could manage all of the internship opportunities. While resources are in place to evaluate the internship experiences, that practice is not consistent nor are findings widely shared. In practice, some students cannot complete an internship in a semester given their work schedules—certainly more paid internships would make the option more feasible. Nonetheless, those working in applied learning areas are collaborating more on this campus as a result of the initiatives, and more promotion of the benefits of internships are in place.

Over the next year, a draft co-op education framework was developed to guide the process, including key foundational elements and the basis for evaluation and assessment; internships have also come into the framework. SUNY decided that expanding SUNY Works beyond cooperative education to other forms of applied learning such as internships and service learning would lead to a greater impact. SUNY is continuing to refine the SUNY Works framework with foundational elements, to serve as base for scale up and assessment.

SUNY Works also has collected participant data and created common data definitions in order to better compare outcomes and differentiate various forms of applied learning. Other activities have included reviewing all system level incentives for faculty and student recognition, developing a faculty/campus and employer checklist, and creating a primer on legal issues with student workers.[4] In addition, the SUNY began to develop SUNY Learning Commons, a virtual support network to develop and maintain connections within and across campuses. The network includes tools such as sample presentations, communities of practice for faculty, employers and career staff, and best practices to support implementation.

In addition, in keeping with the focus on professional development, campus staff have attended a number of relevant meetings and conferences, including venues like the World Association for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education (WACE) Summer Institute, the annual SUNY Works Summits, the National Society for Experiential Learning annual conference, and the WACE Global Institute for Phase II institutions.

A grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York was received in 2012, with the goal of leveraging funds, supporting implementation of an online experiential education prep course for students participating in applied learning, plus a curriculum development specialist to facilitate partnerships. The specialist coordinates and leads implementation of the cooperative education curriculum across the SUNY system, working with faculty and employers, disseminating best practices, and helping to develop the SUNY Works Network Database.

Initial Findings on SUNY Works Activities

Another goal of SUNY Works has been to work toward implementing an evaluation template and use the expertise of the Rockefeller Institute of Government at SUNY to help with evaluation of SUNY Works. As a result, the Institute has documented the progress of SUNY Works activities through two studies. The first study (Desai and Zuber 2014) conducted a baseline review of the SUNY Works pilot sites and found that the Phase I schools were developing co-op and internship initiatives, but that SUNY needed to better integrate applied learning into the curriculum and help increase student, faculty, and employer participation. Nine Phase I pilot schools in 2012 were followed by nine additional Phase II schools in July 2013. The majority of the programs used the grant for several activities, such as:

1. Engaging in planning and coordination with faculty, administrators and employers;

2. Developing courses that include internships, co-ops, etc.;

3. Conducting student and employer assessments;

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[4] See http://www.suny.edu/applied-learning/legal-issues/

SUNY University at Albany:
Engagement and Collaboration to Strengthen Relationships

SUNY at Albany has a commitment to public engagement through applied learning from the president to the academic departments, faculty and staff. The faculty engages students in applied learning opportunities across the campus in all academic units. Some of the applied learning offered happens organically as it is part of the courses, departmental programs, and offices. SUNY at Albany created the Community and Public Service Program, which is a campus-wide program administered by the School of Social Welfare that helps build the capacity of the region's non-profit and public sectors through a three course sequence which provides undergraduates from all majors a chance for meaningful service experiences of 60 or 100 hours per semester. Additionally, there are many uncounted examples of experiential learning that happen campus-wide in terms of actions like community service, group and club leadership roles, research opportunities, and paid and unpaid internships.

Though a great deal of internship support is centralized in Career Services, it is decentralized into career offices in various academic departments where faculty can get support for internship coordination. Using funds from SUNY Works, staff have increased their collaboration with other departments in the school in order to sync up the Career Services departments efforts with internships and other applied learning opportunities. The funds also helped them to create a momentum of excitement about centralizing the process of experiential learning and engaging more employers. They brought together a team to discuss increasing centralization, including members from employers, faculty from the School of Business, Arts and Sciences, Public Policy, the internship coordinator from Career Services, and the entrepreneur in residence. Attendance at the WACE conference was helpful in thinking about how to approach the team concept.

A number of activities have come out of recent collaboration. For example, the SUNY Works team created and updated the Internship Handbook, a one stop document on their website for students and faculty to learn all about the requirements and information needed in regards to undergraduate internships within their major. Another effort was to increase relationships and engage with professors and other staff about the increasing value of internships and applied learning experiences. This led to more presentations in classrooms, as well as more individual conversations and initiatives by faculty and staff with students and employers relating to internship opportunities. These relationships have also been used to leverage employer awareness of students by developing strategies employers can use to engage and recruit on-campus. Ultimately, these steps led to an increase of over 17 percent in employers at the annual career fair and an increase of more than 25 percent in student attendance at this event.

Staff at SUNY at Albany are working to decrease the intimidation factor of experiential opportunities, and to get students to see the value of the opportunity by engaging them early on in their first year. One factor they have found to be central to their success is collaboration—between faculty, staff, employers and students—and this is where they are focusing much of their efforts. They are also developing standard definitions for a course tagging mechanism to identify all types of experiential learning (internships, research, peer education, community engaged work) and international learning (study abroad, internships, community engaged work), which would allow better tracking of these experiences, and exploring the idea of a co-curricular transcript.

4. Creating professional development and training for faculty and compensating them for additional responsibility; and

5. Increasing outreach to students, employers, and community members.

This baseline study also found that paid internships (and unpaid) increased, but that not all campuses are tracking outcome data. New credit-bearing experiences, including credit-bearing courses as well as zero-credit transcript options, are being used to "institutionalize" the experiences. In addition, the schools have developed a range of assessment tools, from satisfaction surveys to final papers, but there has been difficulty tracking internships and job placement across departments because there is no central depository on campus. Another major issue is the financial and legal status of co-op and internship students, especially regarding issues like the legal status of paid interns under the Fair Labor Standards Act, liability insurance for students, and so on.

The more recent report (Wagner et al 2015) suggested some features of work-based applied learning opportunities that are successful, including that they are well structured with clear expectations and administrative support; encourage opportunities for applied learning throughout the degree program; are credit bearing; and incorporate alternative assessments of student learning. The authors also identify key points of leverage that can bring efforts to scale, including mandates to require campuses to allow for opportunities, financing support for faculty, students, employers; and supportive infrastructure. The authors conclude that "SUNY Works is unique: there is no other state system in the U.S. that has advanced a work-based learning experience initiative on a scale and across the breadth of types of study programs and institutions encompassed by SUNY" (Wagner et al 2015 p. v).

Analysis of Overall Program Participation

Between Spring 2012 to Fall 2014, the Phase II campuses implemented their plans for SUNY Works implementation and reported student participation in internships and cooperative education.[5] Together, the campuses reported 6,916 (the figures exclude the Niagara "other" data as we discussed) students over this period *(see Figure 1)*, ranging from 2,314 at Buffalo State College to 39 at Broome Community College *(see Figure 3)*. Some of these students participated in more than one time period.[6] Almost 60 percent of participating students were female,[7] and almost 60 percent were 22 to 24 years old.[8] *(See Figure 2)*

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[5] Data in this section is derived from institutional reports on participation. In some cases, data is missing; for example, Niagara County Community College, Orange County Community College, and Rockland Community College are missing participant data in some years, while SUNY Oswego is missing breakouts for student age, gender, credits, etc. in 2012. Buffalo State College is missing all data except for student counts and paid/unpaid internships. Albany did not report any data; however, survey data for years 2013 and 2014 show a total of around 5,000 students in internships. The analysis uses available data to date.

[6] Unless stated otherwise, data reported are on the duplicated counts. 3,773 of the total are unduplicated counts (excluding Buffalo State and the University at Albany, for which the number is unknown). The unduplicated counts have not been calculated.

[7] 738 were missing data on gender and are not included in calculation.

[8] Calculated for all using year of birth and 2014, so may be off slightly.

FIGURE 1: Number of Students Reported to be Participating in Applied Learning Across
All Phase Two Schools
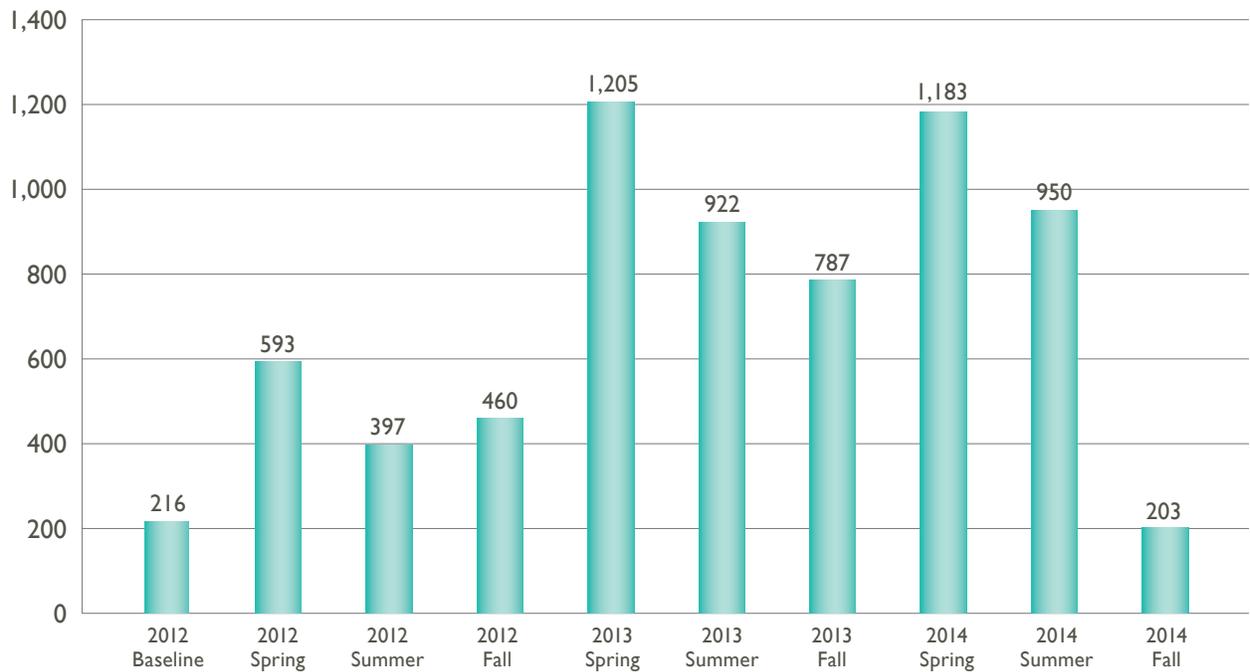
Note: Some students may have been counted in more than one period since particiation spans multiple terms for some activiites. Some schools had missing data. The University at Albany did not report.

FIGURE 2: Number of students reported between 2012 and 2014, by school.
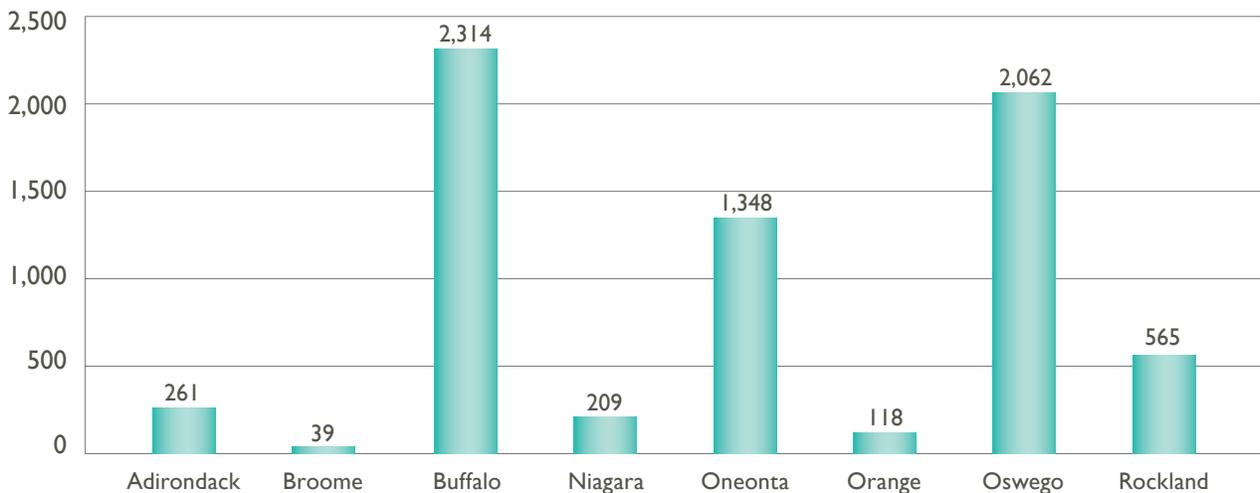
Note: Some students may have been counted in more than one reporting period. The University at Albany did not report.

In terms of the type of experiential learning opportunity, two schools reported co-ops—Broome Community College with 23 and SUNY Oswego with 31. Almost all of the campuses reported internships, for a total of 3,985.[9] Only about 12 percent were paid opportunities.[10] Virtually all reported were credit-bearing experiences; however, it was often difficult for schools to track non-credit opportunities. In total, 356,499 credits were earned by students over this period.[11]

In sum, the Phase II schools reported a substantial number of students participating in work-based learning over the two and a half year period, primarily through internships. Most of these internships were for academic credit and were unpaid *(see Figure 4)*. Students engaged in these activities tended to be female and slightly older than the traditional age for undergraduates.

FIGURE 3: Age of Participants per 1,000 Students over Three Years

4% 21 and younger
5% 35 or older
3% 30–44 years old
11% 25–29 years old
58% 22–24 years old
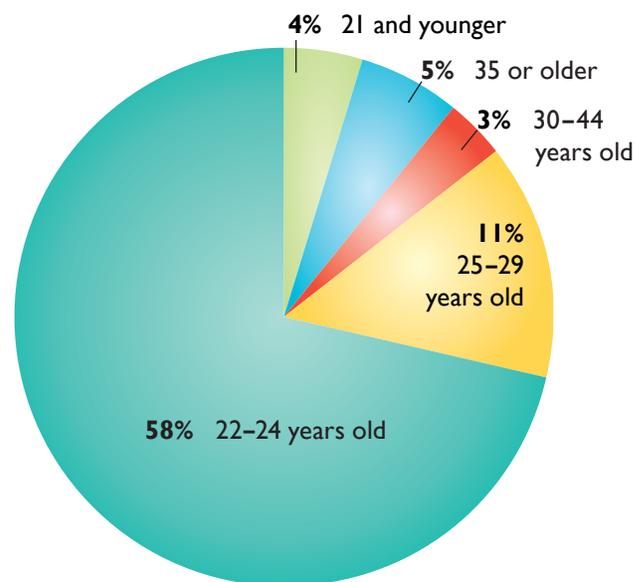
Note: 744 mising data. Buffalo State and The University at Albany did not report.

FIGURE 4: Number of Total Credits Student has Earned.

18	2		15	144	7	139	32
Adirondack	Broome	Buffalo	Niagara	Oneonta	Orange	Oswego	Rockland
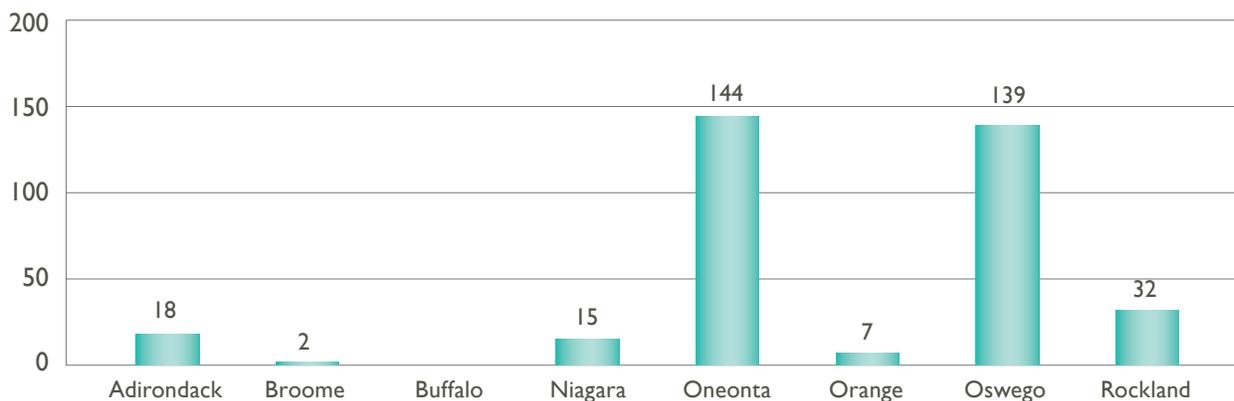
Note: Buffalo State and The University at Albany did not report credits.

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[9] Buffalo State College did not report the number, although it is clear from other sources that they have a substantial number (2,203 in the 2014 survey). The University at Albany did not report, but survey data from 2013 and 2014 total about 5,000 students in internships.

[10] Missing SUNY Oneonta, the University at Albany and Buffalo State College data.

[11] Buffalo State and The University at Albany did not report.

Findings from the Phased II Campus Interviews

In addition to quantitative data collection, other information on campus activities and strategies was gathered through interviews at the nine schools. Between February and May, 2015, representatives from each of the Phase II institutions were interviewed in order to gain a deeper understanding of how

SUNY Buffalo:
Preparing Students to Succeed in Internships

Buffalo's commitment to applied learning is permeated through the campus culture. The majority of the academic programs have an applied learning component and their current strategic plan specifically addresses the inclusion of internships, student research, service-learning, global learning, field experiences, and culminating senior experiences in the curricula of all programs. They have more than a thousand internships available, some of them paid.

The Career Development Center includes a number of applied learning activities, from volunteers and service learning to internships. Internships are individually handled in each department by faculty internship coordinators; however, the Center leads a Faculty Advisory Board for Internships to provide some coordination for faculty coordinators—updating them on legal issues such as unpaid internships, ensuring that learning contracts get out, providing ideas for management of internships, and so on. Internship coordinators have been very positive in their support for these meetings and other efforts to provide information.

Funds from the SUNY Works program focused around the concept of helping students be prepared to participate in internships. The Center created workshops to help the students learn how to make a resume and cover letter and how to interview properly; the workshops are offered throughout the semester or in classrooms. In addition, the college has designed and is currently implementing a Professional Skills Development Module, a hybrid curriculum that aims to enhance the quality of internships by giving the students professional skills prior to being placed in an internship. Eight faculty members from a variety of majors were recruited to work over the summer to create

content modules for the new preparatory course, which they piloted over a period of six months. The modules are customizable for faculty and others to select modules, activities or workshops, on topics such as digital trails, stress management, attire, and connecting with supervisors. They have created surveys on Blackboard to assess online module learning and have developed a pre and post survey to assess student satisfaction with the program.

One challenge of the work is the need for more resources—to fund staff and internship coordinators, which would allow greater support to students during their internship and more engagement with employers as well. The college has thousands of internships each year, in addition to service learning and student teaching—supervising everything can be overwhelming. At the same time, because internships are not required, it can sometimes be difficult to fill internship opportunities (most unpaid) despite high employer demand. Part of their goal is to educate students on the value of these unpaid opportunities through marketing, outreach, and advising. It has been easier to connect with students in professional program areas—such as their hospitality department, which has become a model of engagement in all types of applied learning—than in Liberal Arts fields and other fields.

The greatest success of the work has been skills development for their students, as many positive internship experiences have yielded tremendous training opportunities and employment pathways for graduates. The Center is interested in following up on student experiences through formal assessments; few departments have added questions about applied learning to their own departmental assessments, but many have been looking for learning outcome assessments they could use.

SUNY Works was being implemented on the campus level. Interviewees were asked about what types of applied learning activities were occurring on campus, specifics about their approach to internships and/or cooperative education, challenges in program implementation, extent of outcomes and assessment, and their perspectives of next steps for the future.

Following are some themes that have emerged from the interviews, with some selected examples of Phase II pilot school activities. More detailed descriptions of each campus are included in the sidebar boxes that can be found throughout the report.

Structure of Internship Programs

Internships exist on most campuses, although some are more widespread than others and there are differences in how they are structured. Often there are differences between transfer degrees and career degree/AAS programs at two-year colleges, with the latter more likely to have requirements for internships or clinical experiences. This is particularly true in fields such as business, health professions, computing, graphic design, and website development. Internship courses may not be seen as important in the transfer degree programs like AA and AS. In SUNY Oneonta, all programs offer an internship course for credit, but not all require an internship as part of a degree program; areas that do require them include music industry, professional accounting, environmental science, biology, international studies, and food services.

On some campuses, internships are run or managed by a central office, often located in career services. For example, at Rockland Community College, the career services center manages the internships, with faculty providing approval of the student for an internship with academic credit and then mentoring the student; the internships are very structured, with a certain number of hours that need to be met, periodic meeting with the faculty mentor, keeping a student journal, and writing an evaluation of their experience. The job placement center at Broome Community College has recently set up 20 agreements between employers and campus. The NCCC Career Services Office manages six elective internship courses that are not embedded in any program.

However, in most cases these offices are playing a limited role, such as entering the information in a database, passing along internship opportunities to faculty or department chairs, or dealing with the necessary paperwork. At Broome Community College, for example, opportunities from employers are then passed along to faculty who make the specific arrangements; increasingly, people on campus are referring contacts who are interested in internships to their office. At The University at Albany, paid internships are run through the career services office, while internships for credit are run on the academic side. At Niagara County Community College, despite the fact that they manage several internship courses, most are taught by an instructor on the academic program side; there is not a central office where students can sign up, or that has responsibility for initiating and maintaining contracts with employers. At Buffalo State College, the office works with employers to get them up to date on legal issues and get out the learning contracts; they also lead a faculty advisory board for internships, which keeps faculty internship coordinators up to date.

Most of the sites said that internships are highly decentralized without a single point of contact. Faculty or departments are in charge of coordinating internships for their program(s) and often are teaching specific internship courses. Academic chairs may decide the number of academic credits the internship experience would involve. At Orange County Community College, for example, the majority

Niagara County Community College (NCCC):
Creative Ways to Structure Internships and Increase Outreach

Most applied learning opportunities at Niagara are courses embedded in degree programs, while others are programs that supplement coursework. Niagara is in the process of building a strong framework to support inclusion of formal internships as part of school's student service and academic culture. Toward this end, a leadership team was created to gather information, assess potential opportunities to embed internships into institutional culture, and spread the word about how SUNY Works can support the goals of multiple departments. A committee of all individuals on campus who work with employers, for both credit-bearing and noncredit-bearing programs, was created to make the best use of employer outreach efforts and identify those who may agree to host interns.

In addition to internships embedded in academic courses, which are supervised by instructors, NCCC offers one-, two-, and three-credit internship courses independently of any certificate or degree program. These stand-alone courses allow students to participate in an internship with defined learning outcomes and workplace competencies. Students first meet to discuss careers, skill-sets, professional development, and general areas in which they wish to gain practical experience. Career Services then identifies appropriate work sites and collaborates with faculty to develop opportunities aligned with student expectations and academic targets. They also host workshops on a variety of topics to help students prepare for their roles as interns, including appropriate workplace communication, prioritization and self-management. In a complementary effort, they are rewriting course syllabi to make stand-alone cooperative education courses into EXP (experiential education) courses, available for all students who want to participate in credit-bearing cooperative education, formal internships, and service learning opportunities; it will be brought before the faculty senate curriculum committee soon.

The college would like to promote more opportunities for internships through a number of approaches that are being considered. For example:

- Changing the college "job fair" to a "job and internship fair" to bring more employers to campus and expose more students to internship opportunities.

- Developing a database of internship opportunities for every degree program that does not already feature an experiential education opportunity.

- Reaching out to students in Liberal Arts programs to offer transfer program-specific internship opportunities that will help career planning while making the college a more appealing feeder institution for bachelor's degree-granting institutions.

- Developing preparatory workshops available to students registering for internships that provide information on ethics, interpersonal communication, task management, etc.

- Working with Admissions, Records and Registration, and Student Development to find a way to market formal internships to students entering the college.

Currently, there is not a central office where students can sign up for internships, initiating and maintaining contacts, or that is documenting how internships are assessed; currently, there is a Blackboard group that can push out information to faculty and others on campus, but there is not a lot of training. The college plans to develop a committee of internship instructors on campus to examine the ways internships are evaluated and discuss potential methods of campus-wide evaluation. In addition, staff met with the college's Student Life Coordinator to explore the potential of making experiential education evaluation a part of the co-curricular transcript.

of internships are for courses for academic credit, and faculty have to approve a student to ensure they meet the prerequisites. Frequently programs or departments have internship coordinators that serve as the contact for internship selection and placements. However, this type of structure can lead to several challenges, including training, the need for consistency, and legal and regulatory requirements.

Many interviewees stressed the need for consistency across internships on campus. Because the internships are largely run within departments, the characteristics may vary widely depending on the nature of the program. However, many noted that it would be helpful to have a broad framework so that students would know what to expect. One of the long term goals at Adirondack Community College is to solidify the approaches to ensure that students with internships are getting similar experiences. SUNY Oneonta found that their internship programs were functioning very differently, and established an advisory board that created a survey that was administered to all departments, and could make recommendations to the provost.

There are also legal, regulatory, and ethical issues that apply to internships, from the perspective of both institutional policies and state Department of Labor laws. Faculty internship coordinators may not be trained in the details of these issues, and even if they are, turnover can mean a loss of that knowledge. Oneonta mentioned that faculty coordinators change over time and there's not necessarily training when a new person comes into the role; some were not aware of the college's policies regarding the number of hours of student work or interaction with mentors.

At some campuses, steps are being taken to mitigate the impact of these issues. For example, some have developed internship manuals that explain policies, procedures, and regulations to both faculty and employers in some cases. Others have developed modules that can be used by faculty within the classroom. At The University at Albany, for example, efforts are being made to synthesize and sync up internships run through career services and those that are run on the academic side. At Niagara County Community College, they are trying to educate faculty through a blackboard group, by providing information on how to develop learning outcome guidelines, components of internships that are best practices in the field, Department of Labor standards, and presentations from applied learning conferences. Buffalo State College has been developing online modules to provide content in a number of areas, such as fair labor standards, insurance, and other issues relevant for faculty internship coordinators. They have been piloting and testing the modules over the past few months.

Roles Vary Greatly for Different Faculty and Programs

Many interviewees stressed the importance of faculty involvement. Not only do faculty oversee many internships on campus, but they also may have contacts with employers or other entities that can host interns. They also can help with developing content or curricula for courses and workshops. But faculty buy-in is not always easy to achieve. As noted by one interviewee, there is a classic divide between student affairs and academic affairs, which needs to be overcome through communication and relationship building.

One way to cultivate faculty buy-in is to host meetings or other forms of personal conversation. At Adirondack Community College, for example, they started with a seminar that brought together all of the faculty involved in applied learning on campus. Albany initially pulled together a team that included the internship coordinator in Career Services, an employer from the local community, and representatives from the school of business, arts and sciences, the school of public policy and the

SUNY Oneonta:
Improving Consistency in Internships Across Campus

SUNY Oneonta does not have a centralized method for offering applied and experiential learning opportunities for their students, although many opportunities exist—international internships, field studies, cooperative learning, and domestic internships. Applied learning is happening in different pockets across campus, and each does not necessarily know what the other is doing. In an effort to streamline the process, the college created both a leadership team and an internship advisory board. The leadership team—which included the college president, the internship coordinator, institutional research, and the faculty internship coordinator for the Food Service program--identified three directions: (1) increasing internship opportunities for liberal arts majors, (2) increasing ties between campus, community, and (3) local businesses, and building commonalities across internships on campus.

The leadership team established an Internship Advisory Board (IAB) to gather data and to make recommendations to the Provost with the goal of building greater consistency in the quality of all campus internships. SUNY Oneonta has a College Internship Coordinator, who reviews all of the various internship programs available on campus. All programs offer an internship course for credit, but only a few programs require internships in their majors—music, professional accounting, environmental science, biology, child family services, food service, philosophy and foreign language. However, the IAB found that the internship programs were all functioning differently, with different academic requirements and ways of assessing students' experiences.

They created an in-depth survey that could be administered to all departments to begin the process of reviewing current programs to build a common structure that is of greatest quality for students. Data is currently being collected, and the group will then make recommendations to the provost.

One challenge to consistency in internships is that faculty internship coordinators in each department frequently change over time, and there may not be training when a person comes into that role. Some faculty internship coordinators may want information on basic policies, hours, and advising required. Some coordinators are also adjuncts which presents challenges for compensation models. While every program has challenges and successes, the faculty are using it as an opportunity to create collaboration between departments and learn about compliance with equal opportunity laws and ethical guidelines. It has been important to build communication and trust between academic affairs and student affairs.

Internship outreach is starting to gain traction with both students and employers—they are seeing a huge increase in the number of noncredit internships students are interested in as early as freshman year. Several years ago, SUNY Oneonta initiated a summer opportunity fair on campus to bring in local employers to talk to students about summer internships and job opportunities, which has been a big success. More recently, they initiated a New York City internship fair during winter break so that students from the area and or students that wanted to be in the area could interact with the employers based in the city. To complement and learn from these events, a Summer Experience Survey was created in collaboration with the Office of Continuing Education and Summer Session, International Education, Center for Social Responsibility and Community, and Career Development to capture student involvement in experiential education during the summer months, both academic and non-credit internships. Tracking has begun on paid versus unpaid opportunities, as well.

entrepreneurship side; after a period of low activity, they are starting to regroup to discuss issues that have emerged over the past year. Rockland Community College believes that it is essential to have good relationships with faculty, with good personal relationships rather than top down control.

There are also various ways of using faculty compensation, from part of regular course load to being paid overages to course relief. Faculty may differ widely in the number of interns in their program, and this may be reflected in different methods of compensation. According to Buffalo State College, for example, faculty compensation is handled by 30 different departments in 30 different ways, such as part of a course load or overages.

Students' Skill Level is an Important Factor in Preparing Them for Internships

Several interviewees noted that many of their students are not ready to participate in an internship, especially students at community colleges. They may not have skills such as resume writing or critical thinking that employers mention is important. Schools have different ways of dealing with this issue, including workshops, use of a preparatory curriculum, and online modules.

For example, SUNY Oswego developed a preparatory curriculum course (SUNY Wide), which integrates the online concepts of Open SUNY and the SUNY Works component of internships and cooperative education. They are currently piloting it in Engineering, but plan to expand it throughout the college over time. In one innovative initiative, Rockland Community College created a career clothing program where people have donated over a thousand articles of clothing.

At Buffalo State College, the SUNY Works leadership team decided that one component would be around the concept of helping students who want to participate in internships to be as prepared as they could be; students need to be adequately prepared to succeed in their internships. Staff at the Career Center work with the curriculum team and help lead an effort of eight faculty members who have been working to create online modules to support preparation and skills development to address responses from employers. Some of the modules can be used in the classroom to supplement lectures and provide information on issues such as attire, interviews, resumes, stress management, and cleaning up your online presence.

Outreach to Recruit Interns and Employers is a Challenge

Some campuses have a long history of internships and other forms of applied learning, and have no problem recruiting students for internships. However, at other schools, programs are relatively new or less developed. As a result, schools often use grant money to fund outreach materials such as videos, promotional materials, student ambassadors, and social media.

For example, at Adirondack Community College, they are highlighting internships at the college through video production, especially for their AAS programs. Broome Community College uses fliers with information about internships, co-ops, and service learning. Orange County Community College used grant funding to develop new brochures and promotional articles, as well as videos featuring interns and employers. OCC has also tried to use student ambassadors to put up posters around campus, visit departments and talk to chairs about making announcements in classes, and other ways to get the word out. Rockland Community College offers a wide range of workshops for students, including those specifically requested by faculty to host in their classrooms, and has created many career videos (including one on internships) that are hosted on the school's website as well as YouTube.

SUNY Orange:
Outreach Improving Student and Employer Understanding

Several years ago SUNY Orange made the commitment to make the internship program part of career services. Most internships are for academic approval and require faculty approval, but faculty screen students and then send them to Career Services for placement. One example is a great partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, which has led to unique learning experiences for the students. The Chamber hosted 12 interns/volunteers this year; students performed meaningful work and were provided with the opportunity to network with Chamber members during events or office visits. The Chamber became a platform for many of the interns to gain marketable skills and develop their professional networks. Several of the students moved on to other internships or found employment.

Outreach is a large part of the college's goals in the near term. Staff have worked closely with the college's Advancement Office to design marketing materials, including new brochures and promotional materials, to help promote the Career Services Office and available internships to students and local businesses. They use large posters and publish two newsletters that feature internship students. Internship information was distributed to students at the college's I-Connect week—a campus-wide student services awareness program—as well as the Chamber Expo and the Tech Expo. In addition, promotional material is handed out when employers come to campus and is distributed during the college's annual job fair. Other outreach activities have included:

- Career Services has partnered with the Center for Teaching and Learning to produce videos that feature student interns and employers.

- The Career Portal features an intern student each semester and informs the reader how they can get in touch with the office to help in finding an internship.

- Students are recruited for the Ambassador Program to promote the Office as well as individual internships by setting up information tables several times a month.

- An event co-sponsored by the alumni office helped to reach out to alumni who have the capacity to hire interns.

- Recruitment of retired business leaders to be career advisors has helped students be more prepared for interviews.

Together, these outreach efforts have been able to increase not only employer interest but also student participation. More resources would enable more outreach to the employer community and funding for unpaid internships.

One challenge is trying to get employers to understand that an internship is more than just a way to fill vacant positions; it is an opportunity to show students what the industry that they are studying to be a part of is like. In addressing this issue, the college's internship manual went through a thorough review and revision, leading to the decision to divide the manual into two, one for students and one for employers. The employer manual includes a section on paid vs. unpaid internships and explains the DOL regulations governing unpaid internships.

Another challenge is making sure that students understand the value of an internship whether it is paid or not. They have found that not only do students really enjoy the internship, but also many students received paid positions following the internship. Recently, staff began to look into the opportunity to list internships on co-curricular transcripts by checking with other colleges to see how they handle these transcripts; the college will be forming a committee to look into this in greater detail.

They have also put up posters with famous people who used to be interns, and tried to integrate social media into all of their workshops.

SUNY Oswego notes that outreach is particularly important for longer-term forms of applied learning such as cooperative programs of a semester to six months long. Students need to plan early enough to take advantage of such opportunities, as they need to have a free semester, and students and families need to wrap their heads around the concept of applied learning.

Collaboration and Partnerships are Central to the Success of Programs

To maximize opportunities for internships and other applied learning on campus, it is important to cultivate relationships not only with faculty, but also with other campus offices such as study abroad, student services, and even institutional research. Staff members at Broome Community College try to work closely with the people in charge of service learning and civic engagement. The University at Albany recently began working with their office for Study Abroad, not realizing that many of their students complete internships abroad. Orange County Community College works very closely with the admissions office to participate in some activities, and has partnered with the center for teaching and learning to help develop videos that feature student interns and employers. At SUNY Oneonta, the SUNY Works leadership team—which included the college president, the internship coordinator, a faculty member, and institutional research—met to identify three paths: increasing opportunities for liberal arts majors, increasing ties among the campus, local community and businesses, and building commonalities across the campus internship programs.

Sites also use various strategies to identify and work with employers, alumni and other partners. Frequently faculty members have contacts in the industry, although they may not pass those along to career services. Rockland Community College works closely with the county's One Stop, but many small businesses call them directly. Orange County Community College has a very strong partnership with the chamber of commerce, and they have sent many students there that have ended up getting employment through that vehicle. They also have educated employers regarding Department of Labor regulations and have integrated information into their internship manual. OCC also has a good relationship with the alumni office, which helped them cosponsor an event that helped reach out to alumni who have the capacity to take on interns, and have recruited retirees from the business community to be career advisors—preparing them for interviews and providing feedback on their resumes. SUNY Oneonta has partnered with the county's chamber of commerce to host a networking event with local businesses to showcase applied learning opportunities, resulting in some new partnerships. They also host a summer opportunity fair on campus, including both internships and service learning, and recently initiated a New York City summer so that students could interact with employers over the winter break.

Professional Development is an Ongoing Need

Another important use for funding is for professional development. WACE and SUNY conferences and meetings have provided opportunities for networking with other staff and faculty who are involved in applied learning, as well as the development of new relationships across campuses. They have also fostered team building and provided training on content.

According to one interviewee, the WACE conference helped participants approach applied learning with a team concept and provided some great ideas; however, most of the people there were from career services offices. Rockland Community College noted that the funding allowed professional development in order to keep abreast of what other people in the same field are doing. SUNY Oswego felt that they were able to build a team and start embedding the internship program. Niagara County Community College also mentioned the SUNY Career Development Organization which has a website, hosts conferences, and provides opportunities for collaboration among career service professionals.

SUNY Oswego:
Cooperative Education and Early Awareness

SUNY Oswego has centralized the applied learning program at the Center for Experiential Learning, though faculty engage in various aspects of the work. The Center assists students in finding internships, co-ops, global labs, international internship programs, labs in manufacturing and permaculture, as well as a mentor-scholar program for STEM students.

SUNY Oswego has had a co-op program in place since 2010, modeled after other well-known long-standing co-ops. The co-op program has a duration of a semester to six months, which staff feel is optimal for students, and 43 students have gone through the program since Spring 2012. One key lesson has been the need to educate students and families about the need to plan ahead so they have a free semester. Working with SUNY and WACE, they developed a co-op scholarship for students in order to help them bring down their debt load. They also developed a professional skills preparatory course—SUNY Wide—as a requirement of the program, but have been trying to scale up across the campus. The program was first piloted in the Engineering department, focusing on the competencies of communications, ethics, teamwork, and professional etiquette.

The campus also offers internships and service learning and is starting to define the different experiences better in an effort to bring more value to the program for students. Internships have been around campus since the 1970s, but are just now growing rapidly due to employer demand. Most internships are part time in nature because there is a limit on the number of credits that can go toward a degree.

The goal of educators at SUNY Oswego is to empower students to learn about the process of transferring skills from the classroom into real world scenarios. They also hope to assist students in making sure that they understand the soft-skills that are needed to work in the corporate or business world. The faculty work to influence the students to transition themselves to the work world where they will act professionally, ethically, and meaningfully. To help in these efforts, staff participated in professional development opportunities focused specifically on employer relations, developing a workplace competency framework, and building action plans for co-op and internship scaling up. They also convened campus stakeholders and built enthusiasm among the students and the staff for applied learning options.

Nonetheless, staff and faculty see recruitment as one of the biggest challenges. They have a great group of potential interns and employers, but timing that connection does not always work. It is also difficult to keep faculty engaged in the work because of several barriers, such as awareness and compensation. The latter is also one of the challenges that they have with students. The staff is trying to make students and their families understand the value of an internship even if it is unpaid.

Evaluation Is Still Fairly Limited but a Growing Interest and Goal

Tracking and assessment of internships is crucial to continued success. However, there does not appear to be much happening in this area, although the timing may make it difficult to show results to date. Some sites are tracking student participation and have student and/or employer satisfaction surveys. For example, Orange County Community College requires evaluations of students from site supervisors, and asks a number of students to provide feedback on their internship experience. SUNY Oswego has been working with their institutional research office to collect more data; currently they do evaluations with employers but would like to do more tracking of students. SUNY Oneonta administers surveys to both students and employers at their summer opportunities fair. One of the faculty members at Buffalo State College is in the process of conducting a pre- and post-test for the outcomes of online modules being piloted in the class.

In decentralized structures, faculty members do not seem to be including internship courses in their own outcomes measures, or at least there doesn't seem to be a central contact for such evaluations. Niagara County Community College notes that their career services office cannot document how internships are assessed campus-wide because most programs are overseen by individual instructors, although there is some interest in developing that information. Buffalo State College mentioned that there are a couple of departments that have added a question or two to their own departmental assessments.

Tracking appears to be more common for internships that are attached to academic credit. Many internships that are unpaid and do not involve academic credit are not reported. For example, SUNY Oneonta noted that they don't have a solid method of tracking non-academic experiences. However, they are working with their summer session office to implement a summer experience survey that gathers information about noncredit bearing internships and other applied learning experiences. In addition, the Career Development Center is examining what students are doing after graduation, and the survey will include a section that asks about student satisfaction with their applied learning experiences.

Future Needs for Funding Support are Central

Virtually all interviewees stressed the importance of more funding, for both staff time to identify and support opportunities for internships and partnerships as well as student stipends or paid internships. Many students cannot afford to participate in opportunities that do not have some form of compensation. And many offices or faculty are strained with the number of internships they are working with. For example, at The University at Albany without more human resources they have had to pull people from other aspects of their work, which means dedicating less time to employer relations. Orange County Community College believes that many internship opportunities go unfilled because students are not in a position to take unpaid internships. They are trying to raise money to support some of these students, including speaking with their foundation's office of institutional advancement. At Buffalo State they are struggling with funding for staff and faculty internship coordinators given the importance of supervising large numbers of interns and service learning; also hundreds of internship positions go unfilled despite many requests from employers.

Rockland Community College (RCC):
Structuring Internships to Further Success

Rockland provides an array of opportunities to students in all areas of applied learning. For example, many of the courses and student projects on campus have an applied learning component, which the campus is making a commitment to developing. A solid philosophical adherence to the benefits of applied learning has been an underpinning to many of the programs and offerings that RCC has developed over the years, and applied learning has been a central activity for the faculty at Rockland since the 1990s. Several major departments require clinicals, internships, or practicum for graduation. Clinicals are part of planned instructional activities that take place off campus at the appropriate professional site. EMS, Occupational Therapy, Teachers Education, and Nursing students perform clinicals under the supervision of a qualified faculty member. Additionally, the school has an honors program that requires students to either study abroad or participate in an internship, as well as an entrepreneurship program and business program that both have required internships, allowing students to attain some applied learning opportunities.

In an effort to centralize the programs, they created a Career Services Center, which covers all facets of applied learning. The location of the school allows for a lot of different businesses to come into the school and find students for internship opportunities. They practice applied learning by giving students the opportunity to take part in paid and unpaid internships, clinical experiences, learning in practicum opportunities, work study, and cooperative education. Members of the Career Services staff have attended six major learning conferences in order to further their knowledge of internships and co-ops. They have used this knowledge to further their plan of focusing on nontraditional careers, providing a large choice

of workshops for students and frequently going into classrooms upon faculty request; the school has harnessed the power of social media to its benefit by incorporating it into their workshops. Additionally, they hold career-to-career forums for students and even take those forums to high schools in the area as well. They have also developed a range of videos that are posted on their website (sunyrockland/edu/campus-life/services/career), one focusing specifically on internships. Another interesting effort is a program for students to obtain interview and work appropriate clothing for free, called "Clothes the Deal."

SUNY Works funds have allowed the campus to provide students with structured, centralized, academic, and formal alternatives to classroom learning. Students perform internships under the tutelage of a faculty mentor for academic credit, while Career Services finds intern opportunities and manages the process. Placement with an appropriate business or organization, along with company supervision, is essential to ensuring a successful experience. The college has instituted highly structured prerequisites to the internship experience, mainly two college courses within a particular field, a 2.5 GPA, and approval of Career Services. In order to receive credit for participation in an internship, students must also put in at least 45 hours per credit, keep a journal, and write an evaluation of their experiences. A typical internship is three credits or 135 hours, and RCC allows a student to earn up to six internship credits.

Some challenges are that the increasing emphasis on transferability has resulted in internship courses being removed from degree sheets for some of the departments, especially in Liberal Arts or Math Science AA and AAS degree programs, and lack of access to funds is preventing them from all of the services they would like to provide to students.

Another issue raised was the usefulness of co-curricular transcripts. This helps with tracking student participation with various forms of applied learning, and is also a benefit to students when they are looking for jobs. Broome Community College recently purchased the software for co-curricular transcripts, but many schools currently do not have the capacity, and The University at Albany is working on the idea. Niagara County Community College said that in the absence of a standardized internship evaluation, co-curricular transcripts are important so there's some record of applied learning experiences. They currently have many things listed on their co-curricular transcripts but could make more use of them.

Some interviewees expressed concern that internships are being eliminated from degree sheets, with internship options remaining only in the AAS degrees and certificate programs but many programs in AA or AS programs may not have the option. Others also mentioned that there are limits on the number of credits toward a degree, which impacts efforts for applied learning.

At least one interviewee hopes to formalize collaboration among applied learning groups on campus by moving them into one physical space. Several hope for a more uniform approach to internships campus wide, including evaluations and provisions of information to learning outcomes and legal issues. Training is very important, in how to develop a good internship experience, how to fill out the appropriate paperwork, and in how to do an evaluation of internship procedures and outcomes. It is important also to provide some good learning outcome-based assessments that departments can use for internship courses.

Cooperative Education is a Growing Strategic Area

Most of the SUNY Works schools were funding activities related to their internship program. However, some mentioned cooperative education, service learning, and community service as other activities on campus. For example, Orange County Community College participates in SOARS, a research based competition for students that is run on the academic side of the house. They also have a service learning component, especially through the honors program where it is a requirement. In addition internships and service learning opportunities, SUNY Oswego developed a co-op program in 2010 as a semester to six-month long experience.

SUNY Oneonta mentioned that applied learning is happening in many different pockets across campus, but each does not necessarily know what the others are doing. Recently, however, they have been finding opportunities to collaborate. The Career Development Center at Buffalo State includes much of applied learning on campus—service learning, community service and internships—while research is done through the academic side.

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS FOR APPLIED LEARNING AT SUNY

This report has provided a wealth of information on applied learning at SUNY, with a particular focus on work-based learning at the Phase II campuses through SUNY Works. SUNY has developed a conceptual framework for applied learning across the system, and SUNY Works has a crucial role to play—especially if all SUNY students are to engage in at least one form of applied learning before they graduate. Implementation is coming in several stages, as various grants and activities are scaled up to more campuses. There are a wide range of activities already occurring—with the most activity in the

areas of in community service, internships, service learning, and practicum/clinicals. Increasing student participation in cooperative education and international learning will be an important goal.

SUNY Works is in the process of being implemented—Phase I schools have had success in engaging in work with faculty, administrators and employers, developing courses that include internships and cooperative education, implementing professional development and training for faculty and staff, and increasing outreach to students, employers, and community. More recently, the Phase II campuses have been engaging in similar activities, such as expanding internships, increasing outreach and marketing, professional development, faculty incentives, and job fairs. Between Spring 2012 and Fall 2014, a total of more than 7,000 students have participated in internships or cooperative education. Although currently most of these experiences are for academic credit and are unpaid, there are other models and experiences that are difficult to track.

Several themes of findings have emerged from conversations with people implementing these program activities on campus:

1. *Structure of Programming*—On most campuses internships are highly decentralized, and no single office plays a major leadership role. Individual faculty or departments often are in charge of coordinating internships In some cases this has led to inconsistency in applied learning experiences across campuses, as well as a lack of experience and training on pertinent legal requirements.

2. *Role of Faculty*—Engagement of faculty in applied learning programs is essential, particularly in arranging and supervising internships, but also for developing content for courses or workshops. However, it can be difficult to gain faculty buy-in, especially when there are no funds available to support engagement with internships. Campuses have used a number of strategies to address this issue, such as meetings and participation on committees, as well as financial incentives.

3. *Importance of Preparation*—In order for students to be prepared to succeed in their work-based learning experiences, it is essential that campuses provide orientation and oversight to the internship experience. Many campuses provide workshops or offer workplace and career preparatory curriculum, and some deliver these in online modules.

4. *Outreach*—While trying to expand the number of internships campuses are generating new marketing materials and other strategies, ranging from giant posters to professional videos posted to websites, and social media. These marketing strategies feature students who have engaged in applied learning activities.

5. *Collaboration and Partnerships*—Campuses have found a variety of ways to increase collaboration, both with other offices on campus, and externally with employers and community-based organizations.

6. *Professional Development*—Funding is instrumental in helping people attend conferences to network and improve their professional knowledge. Many campuses want more funds for these kinds of opportunities so they can offer them to a wider range of participants with different backgrounds.

7. *Evaluation*—Some campuses have been tracking student participation and have attempted to assess their experiences through student and employer satisfaction surveys and similar tools.

However, for most campuses that have very decentralized structures, there may be no single point of contact for tracking applied learning engagement and outcomes.

8. *Future Funding*—Funding is needed to support students and faculty, internship coordinators, co-curricular transcripts, and more internship opportunities in liberal arts degree programs where participation is low, as well as to develop more collaboration across different types of applied learning areas.

Recommendations for Next Stage Planning

Taken together, the findings from previous studies, the analysis of participants, the surveys of SUNY campuses, and the interviews of Phase II SUNY Works schools lead to a number of suggestions for future work, as SUNY Works moves forward into its next phase of implementation.

- *Program Infrastructure*—It is clear that there needs to be a balance between the centralization of programming in a single office and decentralization to faculty coordinators without any consistent support. Currently, internships and other applied learning experiences vary widely across campuses and programs in terms of their content, requirements, and faculty and student engagement. Ensuring some consistency among these programs is important, not only for quality student experiences but also for legal and ethical reasons. The SUNY Works office has already created some resources and forums for discussion, but more could be done to help facilitate those conversations, especially for the highly decentralized schools.

- *Faculty Engagement*—Faculty members are highly engaged in applied learning on all of the campuses, but their experiences with applied learning differ substantially in terms of knowledge, support, and compensation. Some faculty coordinators are well funded and consistently engage with students in a structured way, while others are poorly paid for this work and feel overwhelmed. Inconsistency on campuses is often exacerbated by high turnover of internship sites and faculty coordinators, adjunct faculty who are rarely on campus, and a general lack of training. To address these issues, each campus should conduct a review of its compensation policies and institute standard practices. For highly decentralized programs, faculty coordinators would benefit from training and support from career service offices on campus or through SUNY Works central office. Such training could occur on a face-to-face basis, at meetings and online forums, or through models that provide needed information. For those campuses with some level of central coordination, a high quality internship coordinator is critical. Even if the coordinator primarily 'supports' the faculty, that person can be the go-to person for legal issues and set a standard for expectations for applied learning experiences, such as site visits, contracts, employer and student requirements. A central internship coordinator needs to be a fairly seasoned professional, ideally with some faculty experience.

- *Preparation to Succeed*—To successfully participate and benefit from applied learning experiences, students must be prepared with the "soft skills" employers require. This is particularly true for students from a nontraditional or disadvantaged background, who would benefit from tools that will help them transition into a work setting. Students can be supported and supervised through structured advising, mentoring or course-based instruction. Many campuses are already going

through the process of developing preparatory courses or modules; other schools could benefit from their experience.

- *Outreach and Collaboration*—SUNY Works campuses in the second pilot phase have demonstrated many approaches to identifying employers, recruiting students, and engaging faculty. They will require financial and human resources to continue and expand their efforts. Some synergies could be accomplished if campuses had some best practices or a collection of strategies they could refer to, or even shared systems or software.

- *Professional Development*—Professional development, whether through individual meetings or broader conferences is highly beneficial and needs continued funding. However, there are ways to make it even more useful—for example, by using a team approach that includes sending multiple stakeholders from one campus to training seminars so that the learning can be integrated into practice back home.

- *Tracking and Evaluation*—Assessment of student learning, student and employer satisfaction, and other program outcomes needs to be enhanced. SUNY Works should provide resources to encourage the use of some basic standards for data collection, as well as tools for assessment that can be used with students, faculty, and employers.

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