The Media Consortium

Independent Media Internship Program

2010 Summary Evaluation

Submitted 10/22/10

During 2010 the Media Consortium’s Independent Media Internship Program placed 6 interns with members including the Uptake, the Washington Independent, Link TV, Yes! Magazine, the Nation Institute, and the Women’s Media Center.  These interns were placed with MC member organization for a three-month, full-time, paid editorial internship, placing 4 during the Spring semester and 2 during the Summer. MC staff worked hard to recruit a diverse set of young people. Of the six interns in 2010, 4 were female; at least 3 were bilingual; 2 were of Middle Eastern decent; one was of Hispanic decent.

Throughout the year, interns contributed substantial research and reporting to MC members. One intern contributed to a major collaborative project between the Nation Institute and Alternet in launching a citizen reporting project tracking the Tea Party. Another intern identified an interest in immigration reporting and ended up writing a weekly post on immigration news. The contributions of MC interns have been substantial and valuable to independent media and have been a great experience for the interns participating.

'The Media Consortium is providing a wonderful and much-needed service to aspiring journalists. The internship stipend allowed me to work for a publication that I admire and live in a place that I love. In addition, I'm appreciative of the feedback I received during the professional development calls and the networking connections I was able to make along the way.'

-- Keith Rutowski, Yes ! Magzine intern, Spring 2010

At this time the capacity and resource of MC staff to continue supporting this program are being evaluated and next steps will be announced soon.

JB Programmatic notes for TMC:

Running the internship program has a number of phases: Outreach and application process to members, members applicant evaluation, outreach and application process for interns, intern applicant evaluation, program orientation with members, applicant interview coordination with members, new intern orientation, professional develop call recruitment, professional development call scheduling and implementation, collection of intern evaluations (3x per semester), program reports.

With the original goal of running the program during the Fall, Spring & Summer semesters, coordination of this program is recommended to require an average of 20-25 hrs per week, (some weeks it’s minimal and some weeks it’s a **full time commitment**.) Space needs to be made for being able to respond to questions on both sides of the process (members and interns.) Coordination of tasks for the different semesters often overlap, making organization of the entire project a key to it’s success.

There were difficulties in recruiting intern applicants who could follow through with the program, but this may have been a result of timing. Often times by the time the application and interview process had been completed, it was usually within a week of the start of the program and in many cases, students were committed elsewhere.

There is room to negotiate partnerships with TMC members, as many members run their own internship programs. Confusion around the varying programs sometimes made for communication with members and intern applicants time consuming and cumbersome. It would be helpful to streamline some of the processes with members already running internship programs. This would require staff time and capacity to coordinate this development.

Another time consideration for a new person running the program is the time required to get to know TMC members. There was a lot of time spent trying to decipher what programs were being run within the more than 40 members, who the right contacts were, and what the inside politics were with each group. This would be useful information for any new employee and should absolutely be considered when determining time and capacity for new staff. One suggestion would be to do write a survey for TMC members asking them to provide you with an overview of their various programs and who the key staff are running each of them.

I would also suggest using a different application form than Google Forms. The spreadsheet capability of Google Docs is limited and made for much difficulty in trying to track, analyze, and report on applications for both members and interns.