

Excerpts of the 14-page Final Report for the AMPA Internship Program — internal document, please do not share. Respondents' names removed for privacy.

The data collected for this project was to determine best practices for developing an arts internship program that will be specific to Indigenous applicants. The final report contained the data necessary for making program decisions and writing grant applications and sponsorship letters.

I designed the questions to build data on several areas including: details of internships, experience gained by past interns, skills and knowledge gained, and the challenges of being an intern. Member magazines commented on experiences, areas of improvement in current program, and benefits of interns to their organizations. Outside respondents explained their internships programs and/or their internship experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research for this project included surveys and telephone interviews. Each of the research groups was asked questions that were particular to their experiences. AMPA members and past interns were sent online surveys, and three members were interviewed by telephone. Thirty-two members and three past interns returned their surveys. One telephone interview was done for each of the remaining categories.

Research questions were designed to assess the state of AMPA's current intern program and examine the opportunities and challenges for creating a program that will be unique to Indigenous interns.

SUMMARY OF DATA

Current Internship Opportunities

Of the thirty-two respondents, 77% have hired Indigenous interns and 55% have hired Indigenous staff or freelancers. Slightly less than 50% have the capacity to hire any interns. The primary reasons for not hiring interns are lack of funding or supervisory capacity, inability to meet funding requirements, and no need for additional help. One respondent cannot hire interns but would like to be connected to Indigenous freelancers. Of those that can hire interns, 10% can hire every two years, 26% once per year, and 13% more than once a year.

Skills and Knowledge Gained by Interns

Interns feel that their internship gave them valuable skills in the following areas that they otherwise might not have learned outside of their education.

These skills have created career benefits and opportunities. The improved writing and editing skills have been useful for writing outside of their work including creative non-fiction writing. Magazine writing has helped them look for nuances and new ways to engage readers that are different from methods used in journalism or assignment writing. Understanding how the magazine production and website software work has allowed them to apply for more jobs. People skills such as being a good team worker has improved relationships. One intern noticed that her resume is being better received by prospective employers.

Other skills that interns can learn include understanding the roles of each person on the team. This will help them decide where they want to focus their energies as they continue in their careers. Learning these roles also helps interns better understand the dynamics of organizations that rely on a team of people. This is an essential skill that only comes with practice. They need to understand that media can be a fast-paced, intense environment. It is also important that interns advocate for themselves when they want to better understand things. Interns need to learn that they can't expect their supervisor to know what they would like to work on. In organizations that have some flexibility, the skill of respectfully speaking up is important.

Benefits of Hiring Interns

Interns help magazines organize workflow and takes some of the stress off staff. They are important for maintaining social media accounts. Interns also raise public awareness of magazines when they talk to others about their experiences. This results in more applicants and requests for internships, which become a goals of emerging professionals. Often, applicants reapply for internships, which helps reduce basic training needs. Interns and freelancers are often former interns, which benefits the magazine because these employees understand the magazine's processes and requirements. Interns also bring new talent, experiences, and views; they provide new takes on stories.

[Respondent], an Indigenous reporter with CBC News, sees important benefits to companies who hire Indigenous reporters and staff. They strengthen and diversify the workforce to reflect Canada and help build a stronger product and better reflect the First Peoples who live in Canada. This helps gain the trust of viewers, listeners, and readers in Indigenous communities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

When respondents were asked whether there was additional information they wished to provide, it generally fell into one category: Magazines need training and resources that address communications issues between people with different cultural backgrounds.

There is a desire for management and staff to receive appropriate training about Indigenous perspectives and the systemic barriers Indigenous people face regarding equitable representation.