The Value of Applied Internships

When students have work and internship opportunities during college that allow them to apply what they have learned in school, it improves their chances, as college graduates, to land work. In fact, having this kind of meaningful applied work increases the chances of landing a full-time job by 27 percent.

The "employment benefit" for graduates who strongly agreed they had applied internships or jobs in college exists for all those who have earned their degrees in the past four years---regardless of gender, race, the type of institution they graduated from or whether they are the first in their families to attend college.

This finding reinforces that what students do while in college, and the opportunities their institutions afford them, are more important than a number of other factors, including the particular school they attend. This discovery will have far-reaching effects on colleges and universities as well as high schools. In a previous Trend Alert, we recently reported on the rise of high school internships and their value to employers. There will be more emphasis on internships for students beginning in high school.

As if these data weren't enough, this study also revealed that graduates' odds of being engaged at work are higher when they have had internships. Recent graduates who strongly agreed they had an applied internship or job are also more likely to be engaged at work. An impressive 56 percent of employed recent graduates, who took part in applied internships, are engaged at work---meaning they are involved in and enthusiastic about their work---compared with only 33 percent of those who did not. Wise employers will understand how this reinforces their role in the early engagement process. They will value their interns more highly than they do now and capitalize on the precious pipeline that applied internships can deliver.

While the number of students participating in internships has been rising, sadly, relatively few (only 6 percent strongly agreed) of all college graduates report participating in applied internships or job opportunities. Now that they know the stakes, hopefully, this data will greatly influence how some current college students invest their time between now and graduation day.

To read the full study, visit http://www.gallup.com/poll/168848/life-college-matters-life-college.aspx.

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