

“Internship Programs in Distressed Communities”
Presented by J. Kaczynski

<https://connect.msu.edu/p8nkxw7w86d>

Jennifer Bruen: Alright, we’re going to get started, it’s a little after two o’clock and we may have others join us in a few minutes. I have John Kaczynski here and he will be presenting on internship programs in distressed communities. I do have to start by explaining a little bit about our program. The MSU EDA University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI) was established in the fall of 2011 with support from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. The purpose of the University Center is to support innovative economic development strategies that may yield high-growth entrepreneurship, job creation and economic innovation for distressed regions.

This webinar that you are about to view is a part of a collaborative effort between REI and it’s dynamic, broad-based network partners and we’re all working to strengthen Michigan’s economy. So this is, I think, our fourth or fifth webinar and I’m going to let John begin his presentation.

John Kaczynski: Ok. Thank you, Jen. Good afternoon and thank you to everybody that’s come in on the call today to talk about “Internships in our Distressed Communities around Michigan”. My name is John Kaczynski and I serve as the Director for the Center for Public Policy & Service at Saginaw Valley State University. Beyond that I am also a doctoral student in the Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education Administration program at Michigan State University.

Before we begin, I do want to just again thank the United States Chamber of Commerce, specifically Economic Development Administration, and also the Michigan State University and the Center for Community and Economic Development for this opportunity to be able to sort of pass along best practices and each other’s case studies to practitioners and policy-makers throughout the state of Michigan

Beyond this I would also like to give recognition to Kathie Dunbar, who is the executive director at the South Lansing Community Development Association, and also Jeremy DeRoo at LINC in Southside Grand Rapids. Really, I appreciate the time these guys took out of their day to meet with me and answer any questions I had via email, phone calls, etc. So big thanks to them.

Today, we’re really going to talk about a co-learning plan that will hopefully introduce new knowledge into the area of “Internship Programs in Distressed Communities”. We’re going to talk a little bit about the best practices for creating internship programs and also talk a little bit about how these programs work with community development

organizations in our urban regions throughout Michigan.

Again, I am going to relate back, since I am a faculty member of Saginaw Valley State University, I'm going to talk a little bit about the plan that we created through our "Lansing Living Leadership Program (L3)" and the South Lansing Community Development Association (SLCDA).

When we begin to look at distressed communities we need to be cognizant of the fact that cities are working to overcome their negative perceptions. I still have not met a public servant or somebody involved in leadership activity at the community level that is not trying to remove a negative perception. So we are going to nuance this conversation with the understanding that that is a constant variable. Another thing that has been fairly constant in many of our urban communities is that folks that are engaged are trying to create a positive change. Sometimes it's through creation of organizations, or sometimes it's through volunteering for organizations, sometimes it can be secular based, can be spiritually based, but they are trying to revitalize their area neighborhoods through different actions.

But for our conversation today, we are talking more specifically about a generation just recently graduating from college, the millennial generation, and talking about a little bit "How can we capture the best practices that are taking place?" When I read this grant and I began to think about what our recent graduates are doing, I began to think about this specific individual who is on the Powerpoint slide in front of you, Emily Doer. She founded a place called Hostel Detroit. I was asking the question, "Well if this twenty-something graduated from college and went out and formed this organization and tried to revitalize her community in her mid-twenties, what did she do in college? More importantly, what did she do immediately after college that allowed her to try to make this positive change in her community?" She was a graduate of Central Michigan University and she was fairly involved as an economics major at Central Michigan but one of the points that she brought up through either her panels that she speaks on or the conversations I've had with her, she participated in an internship at the Center for Progressive Leadership that taught her the skills to be able to lead a community development organization. It was this internship that really pointed her in the direction of her career aspirations following undergraduate studies and later on through founding Hostel Detroit.

So we must realize that Miss Doer's actions are significant that this internship at the Center for Progressive Leadership assisted her with founding Hostel Detroit. A question that we should be asking ourselves, either as practitioners or leaders in Michigan, is "How can we transform these students' valuable experiences into something that creates enthusiasm within our graduates to become entrepreneurs and create their own grassroots organizations within our urban centers and distressed communities, duplicating the successes of Miss Doer?" So the importance of internships, without the availability of these internship opportunities, organizations like Hostel Detroit might not have been able to make as large of a positive impact as they have been able to. Also, we need to take a look at CDO's, community development organizations, depend upon interns with specific

skill sets that add value to their organizations. Students, visa versa, depend upon CDO's to develop their skill sets.

What about the importance of Economic Development? Well we talked a little bit about distressed communities. These CDO's are working with distressed communities and becoming the vehicle for community and economic growth within our urban neighborhoods. Furthermore, we need to be cognizant of the fact that a large number of staff within these organizations are interns, vistas or volunteers and that paid staff are actually few in number and are a very small percentage of the overall human capital within that organization.

So what is the issue? When we begin to examine the importance of internship programs through the eyes of an institution of higher learning, community college, flagship university, private college, these programs offer students a service a learning opportunity that teaches transferrable skill sets for which a student can apply in really any career. Through the eyes of an executive director of a community development organization, an enthusiastic intern can be a value added piece which assists in allowing the organization to move forward.

The important piece of the discussion that continues to be ignored is "How do we replicate these programs for distressed communities?" As we mentioned, Miss Doer was in Detroit. Are these programs being replicated in other communities and if they are not, what are some of the best practices from other communities throughout the United States or Michigan that we can begin to look at and hopefully duplicate.

When we look at Chicago, I specifically looked at the University of Chicago and looked at the relationship that the University of Chicago has with the Hyde Park-Kentwood Community Conference. They've had a fairly well established relationship leading all the way back to the 1940's and 1950's in south-side Chicago. University of Chicago has set up a website specifically through their University Community Service Center that allows students to sign up for enrollment in their Summer Links internship program. Summer Links is an internship program that has placed over 400 students with 200 different organizations throughout Chicago.

If we look at Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania has set up a summer internship program through their Netter Center for Community Partnerships. It's really a 12 week program for 15 undergraduate students that engage the West Philadelphia Penn community. Each undergraduate works collectively to solve a public policy issue while also serving as an intern at a local school or a community of faith in West Philadelphia.

Also, when we look at Milwaukee, a much different institution from Chicago, the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Center for Community and Urban Development works to build partnerships between community residents and the university. They

do implement initiatives that engage residents to work together for positive change throughout the communities of Milwaukee. These initiatives do include custom designed classes and service learning activities that combine classroom learning with community action projects.

We look at Columbus, the Ohio State University, and the Columbus Economic and Community Development Institute have also partnered on various projects. They have done a fairly good job establishing internship programs and many of their students have gone on to becoming AmeriCorps VISTA's within their specific office.

We begin to look in Michigan, and more specifically at Lansing. We begin to look at community development organizations that are becoming more embedded in grassroots organizing. So the South Lansing Community Development Association, they were founded approximately ten years ago to serve the distressed community of South Lansing. Over the past ten years this organization that began with one individual has grown to an organization with 7 staff and many more volunteers. The organization truly started from an office in the back of the executive director's residence and over that ten year span has now transformed into an office space in the back of a church. Now that might not sound significant but when you look at the resources that this organization started up with and the resources that are actually available to them now it is quite surprising. The organization itself is not supported by tax dollars but through grant funding and fundraising. The organization supports both community and economic development through multiple lenses. From a community development lens the organization supports farmers markets, community gardens, nutrition education, and community engagement. Through an economic development lens the organization supports assisting small business owners with promoting of their business startups and also attracting small businesses into South Lansing. But to meet these objectives of the organization, the executive director, as I mentioned, does not have that many resources to be able to go out and hire a large staff.

So she depends upon the AmeriCorps program, grant funding from outside sources, volunteers, and college interns for human capital to support her organization. Really without the human capital that is provided through her college interns or volunteers, the SLCDA would be a one person operation and most likely unable to meet all of their objectives nonetheless create positive change to the scale that they have in south Lansing. When we talk about interns, the South Lansing Community Development Association has been looking for interns from institutions of higher learning throughout Michigan since 2006. More specifically the executive director is tapped into Lansing Community College, Michigan State University, and most recently Saginaw Valley State University.

Down the road, when we begin to look at Grand Rapids, it was about the same time that the SLCDA came to fruition, a small organization called LINC, it started out with a named Lighthouse Communities also started in the south town area of Grand

Rapids. As with any organization the scope and mission has increased in breadth over the past ten years. Starting off with a focus on affordable housing, LINC now encompasses a holistic lens of community development. Just like the SLCD, this organization grew from two individuals in 2002 to a staff of thirty-five in 2012. Unlike the SLCD, this organization does not have a full-time paid staff, but they still do rely heavily upon AmeriCorps VISTA's, unpaid interns, and volunteers. The mission of LINC also does encompass economic and community development like the South Lansing Community Development Association. From a community development standpoint the organization works on affordable housing for residents and from an economic development standpoint LINC owns and operates an economic incubator for local entrepreneurs which is almost unheard of for some community development organizations that they have embraced this part of the economic development mission also. Since 2008, LINC has had twelve to thirteen AmeriCorps VISTA's on staff, they've had seven to eight unpaid interns on staff, and of the VISTA's six have become full time employees of LINC, and of the interns three of them have continued on with employment at LINC. The executive director does say that college students and recent graduates bring passion and idealism to the organization. As we know those are two very important parts of community organizing and relationship building on the non-profit side

At Saginaw Valley, we have understood the need for interns in grassroots and political organizations. Therefore, we developed a program that is similar to the program delivered by the Nettler Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania. Our program is made up of a 3-credit course that teaches basic public policy and leadership skills; along with a 3-credit independent study course. For the student to earn class credit for the internship upon completion, we've worked to deliver a course along with an internship in a political office or a community development organization. We've tag lined this program at Saginaw Valley the "Living Leadership Program".

The difference between a traditional internship class and our "Living Leadership" program is that the students live, intern and take a class in Lansing or Washington D.C. The model mimics many internship programs offered by non-profit organizations in Washington currently. However unlike the programs in D.C. our program is completed entirely "in-house" through the university and the total cost is about \$3,500 for 8-weeks and \$1,500 for 3-months in Lansing. When you compare these costs to programs that are currently set up in Washington, the typical costs for a program like this would be about five to ten thousand dollars so it is significantly less. By lowering those costs we are able to open up access to more students participating in the program. We've also developed different scholarship and fellowship options to help offset some of these costs. Our programs were mainly designed for Lansing, Michigan and for Washington D.C. to take place during the summer semester for 10-15 students, however, our future planning is now beginning to look at the possibility of offering a program like this in Detroit or some other urban center.

We said at the beginning there's a class, there's the living component, and there's the internship component. Well when we talk about the living portion of the program it's really arranged for students to either live in apartments or housing rentals just off site. In Washington D.C. the students have predominantly lived on Capitol Hill where as in Lansing they will live in an apartment complex near Michigan State or somewhere near Lansing. They will usually live in the same house in D.C. where we try to mimic the "oxfordshire" model or a "residential-college" model that universities have adopted where students in the same program will live and learn together.

The class portion of the "Leadership" program. Because we do want to be sure the students have as much time in the internship as possible, we deliver the class in a very compressed face-to-face format. Obviously, we have to meet 45 hours throughout the session, or semester. So we try to take care of the first 30 hours in the first 5 days of the session. We meet 6 hours a day and then we usually will not come back until the very end of the session and usually the end of the session is only a 3 hour session. So we do 3 3-hours face-to-face and the other 12 hours are usually delivered in a virtual online format. Really when we have these classes, we'll have directors from CDO's come in and speak as guest lecturers. We'll have people come in from different political organizations whether they are political, for-profit, non-profit, and talk about public policy. We try to keep these lectures no more than one hour when these folks come in and speak and we try to allow for a lot time for dialogue and reflection and processing.

When we talk about the internship portion of the program, the students have to deliver anywhere between 100 and 240 in-service hours, along with the completion of a daily work journal, reflection paper and a 20-page public policy paper at the end of the class. Students can select a book from a list of current events or a public policy question that is of interest to them. This summer, referencing this summer, one of our students in Washington D.C. interned with the national archives wrote about the impacts of declining revenues from governmental entities to support museums and the cultural arts. I know a lot of you probably went "YAWN" after I said that, but there was also another student worked for a place called Service Source which is a non-profit in northern Virginia and she was actually looking at trying to solve some of the issues with veterans that are coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq and trying to engage them with different projects that Service Sources had been funded by the federal government to provide in northern Virginia and try to find better linkages and better conduits for these veterans to find employment. That one was a little more practitioner focused but I felt that both students throughout the program learned a lot of what they wrote about from the internship rather than the actual class that they took.

So when we talk about recommendations for faculty and staff at an institution of higher learning, one of the things that we should always be looking to do is first empowering our career service offices and faculty members to identify internship and employment opportunities. This is a broad generalization. Some institutions do this very well. Some institutions don't do this at all. Some institutions try to do this. I've found in speaking with other colleagues around the state that are engaged in political science or public

administration, some of their best practices have really come down to them going out and engaging in the community whether it's through a public policy panel that they speak on or a civic organization that they belong to and beginning to get the word out that there are students that want to intern in the community. And vice versa, even sending out just a quick straw man to community organizations can usually start the conversation if an organization does not have an internship program trying to get them to begin thinking about possibly hosting an intern for a semester. Another way is through on-campus contacts with your student affairs office and local United Way office. Both offices usually have a list of community development organizations within the community. When we talk about student affairs we are talking more specifically about student life officer or your volunteer center. Usually they have volunteer opportunities. They wouldn't necessarily be listed as internships, but if the organization is looking for volunteers, nine times out of ten these organizations are also hosting interns. Also, the United Way within your community will usually have a complete rundown of community development organizations that they are helping with or sponsoring within that community. Also looking at trying to identify internships within a reasonable distance from your institution can also help. Sometimes they are not cognizant of the fact that these are undergraduate or graduate students and they do have lives outside of the classroom and so sometimes when we can find an internship that is within driving distance for a student, they are more likely to have lower anxiety, participate in more hours of the internship, and hopefully have a better experience. So some questions to begin to ask yourself if you are a faculty member or staff member looking to start up a program:

--What type of organization are you working with or are you looking to work with within your immediate community

--In what areas does the organization deal with? Are they primarily concentrated on community development? If they are, are they looking at food deserts, are they looking at affordable housing? If they are community development, are they dealing with economic incubators or are they dealing with much smaller issues?

--What types of skills does the internship teach? Are you sending your students off to an internship that requires GIS skills or grant writing skills? Will they just need to have a

solid grasp on being able to work in a high-stress environment? Or have a good idea what clerical skills are?

--*Where does the student apply?* This is the disconnect that I usually find in my students. Usually we tell them to go to the internet, more specifically <http://interninmichigan.com>. These students usually have a hard time finding the portal, following through that portal, uploading a resume, uploading a cover letter and they get lost in the mix. As I said, undergrad students have a lot more going on than we usually can see. So if we can usually ease the process and streamline the process, they will be better off and hopefully be able to find an internship or get into an internship that best fits their needs.

So when we talk about information to assist students, I first actually said .org I meant .com. Interninmichigan.com I can't tell you how valuable this asset is for faculty, careers services, staff, and for our students in Michigan to get comfortable with using. I hope that in the near future we will see more community development organizations on the website but it did just startup within the past year. Guide all of your students to that website, it's a great resource. When we talk about community development organizations, these offices typically have a staff of fifteen or fewer, with less than half in administrative roles. So these folks don't have a lot of time to sift through a lot of resumes and cover letters. So sometimes sending the student directly to the office can get that student's foot in the door.

The student's should also be reminded of the physical space to some of these offices as I mentioned earlier. One was in the back of a church. LINC has got a brand new building that I'm very jealous of in Southtown Grand Rapids. Some of them are in an old house such as in Hostel Detroit. Most of the staff in some of these organizations will share a room sometimes they will share the same desk and the same office equipment. Students sometimes will not have a personal space. It will be a communal space. They may only be there on Tuesdays and Thursdays and you will have other interns in there on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Also depending on the size of the organization, the smaller the organization the less staff, the more likely that the student will have to be engaged in various substantive work. Faculty and CDO staff should make sure that students get a clear idea of what the student is hoping to gain. Never hurts anybody for the student, the faculty member, the internship director at the community development organization to find out what the student wants to get out of the internship.

Most students will be asked to answer phones, respond to communications and work with residents in the community. Students also will volunteer at special events that the organization sponsors within the community. As with most internships with CDOs, students are usually assigned special research projects or new programs, or draft talking points for the executive director. Whatever the assignment, students should be reminded that if they are willing to complete the mundane tasks, that they may be assigned more interesting special projects later on.

In the internship, students work directly with the internship coordinator. This coordinator most of the time turns out to be the executive director of the organization. In larger organizations, the coordinator position might be a receptionist or staff assistant. We must remind our students, whoever the person is, whether it's the executive director or even the staff assistant. They should not to dismiss the person, and should try to learn as much as they can from that individual. Students should know that as an intern, they are likely to spend a great deal of time directly with the executive director, and will most likely be very close on the day-to-day action within the office. Many of the smaller organizations have limited resources, which means they usually do not have enough staff to do everything they would like to do, and are not able to pay high salaries to their staff. This usually means interns are welcome to and are often provided the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way to the work of the organization.

Because of the wide array of internships available with CDOs, it is very hard to say what a student might be doing. It is important for faculty to find out what a student would like to do after college and try to identify internship opportunities with grassroots organizations that are of particular interest. This opportunity could lead to employment after college or at very least some well-placed references within the field of endeavor for the student.

One of my former students at Saginaw Valley had this to say when he compared his legislative internship experience to his grassroots experience he said with the community development internship (that he participated in), he felt like he got a more personal experience. In the office, there were as many interns as there were staff. And that's a generalization that you will see in most community development organizations, not saying that you will see it at all. Having this type of environment, as many interns as staff, it created a culture where the interns and staff were good friends. The interns felt comfortable to be able to talk to the staff and find out more about what the staff were interested in and the staff found out more about what they were interested in.

So when we talk about needed skills to be an intern, a lot of undergraduate students, and even graduate students, sometimes will shy away from internships because they believe that they need experience to be in an internship. Well, the internship is the bottom floor level, it's there to help you build the skill sets, so experience does help but it's not necessarily needed. All students should feel comfortable with their writing and communication skills before accepting an internship.

Coursework, a lot of students feel that you know to be involved in a political internship in Lansing and work in the legislature; they have to be a political science major or to be involved in a community development organization that they need to be a sociology major or social work major. That's not necessarily true. We've had students in our program from engineering, biology, communications, nursing, and education participate in community development organization internships at Saginaw Valley. We continue to try to reach out to other disciplines and departments and I always try to empower faculty to do the same and look at it from a very multi-disciplinary nature.

Even though it is not required to complete an internship, the ability to do research and interpret data increases the value of the student to any organization. And then finally and most importantly the ability to write well is quite possibly the most important skill students can have. The smaller the organization, the more likely these students will work to communicate concepts and issues to a variety of audiences. As I mentioned earlier, sometimes the executive director is also the internship coordinator and wears twenty different hats within the organization. Sometimes that intern might become the press secretary for the organization. So making sure that they feel comfortable writing well and communicating what needs to be said is important.

Common questions are:

“Do these students get paid for their experience?”

As we know Grassroots organizations do have a very limited funding source. CDOs can pay an intern or volunteer when they receive a grant or donation that allows for a small summer stipend or other benefit to be paid to interns. However, the lack of pay through a CDO internship experience can turn away a student from the opportunity, but the bottom line of the value from the internship is the long term, the long term benefits. It is not about how much a student should be paid, but how much a student will learn. So if we can again sort of turn the lens and get students to view internships not as a job but as an out of classroom experience that will help them get the job, I think you will usually get a more favorable feedback from students about getting into internship opportunities

Another question I get is “Where should students apply for internships?”

College campuses usually have a list of internships available at their career services office. Of the CDOs that I spoke with, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Saginaw; none of them had a formalized internship program, until a faculty member or student had actually contacted them to discuss the opportunity. So that’s important, just because the organization again does not list the internship with the university does not mean there is not an opportunity there to explore. Of the organizations, LINC does now actively pursue students at their local career fair at Grand Valley State University.

At Saginaw Valley within the Center for Public Policy Service, we actually sent out a letter to over 200 community groups in the Great Lakes Bay Region whether they were secular or spiritually based or otherwise based in a governmental entity about the opportunity to develop an internship program and mentoring an intern during an academic year. There was an average of a 20% response rate to our letter which was great. After an agency will usually respond to our request, we will follow up with a phone call to ask about their needs and the capacity to be able to handle an intern. Sometimes we’ll get organizations that will say “We would love to have an intern,” and I will usually ask, “Well, do you have the resources? Do you have a desk? Do you have a computer? Are you just going to be meeting with the student once a week and they’re going to have to go find a space somewhere else to work?” And this sometimes does happen that students are “telecommunicating” to their internship which might not make

the best experience but it still works. We will then ask them “Well if you really need an intern, do you have the capacity for an intern?” We will then ask them for a job description and we’ll post that job description in our office and also on our online portal.

How do we prepare our students? I can’t emphasize this one enough. Even though students going into CDOs rarely have a dress code for the office, there still is a minimum basic expectation that students should be aware of. The picture on the left I think captures the essence of some of our students that we see in the classroom. But they should be informed that you can’t go off looking like, I don’t want to say a bum, but somebody that is below the average mark of what I would call walking into your first day at your internship. So making sure that they do communicate with their internship director what the proper dress code is on the first day. Manners. They should be reminded that they are going sometimes to the back of the church, sometimes this community development organization might be out of the back of a garage but they should still try to be polite and fairly formal. Office Hours. With CDO’s sometimes it can range. I’ve heard of some of our students working 4 16-hour days in a row and then they have 5 days off because they had a major fund-raising event, had a major community service event that was going on and the internship coordinator or the executive director needed them for that whole time frame. And then there’s some organizations that I’ve heard of, they work basic 8-5 five days a week. Make sure students feel comfortable asking questions about clarity of their work duties and the expectations that the executive director sets out for them in the internship. Then also again asking for feedback. Through our internship program we have the feedback loop where I will send a letter, a formal letter, to the internship coordinator asking for them to evaluate the student interns, but at the end of the internship I also turn around and I ask the student to go onto SurveyMonkey and also fill out our short survey so that I have a fairly good idea about the quality of the internship that they just went through. Sometimes we don’t give due diligence to the places we send our students so sometimes making sure that when we talk about the needs and capacity of a community development organization to house an intern that they do and continue to have that capacity.

So when we talk about sort of the implementation of the program at Saginaw Valley, the “Living Leadership” program, it really did start off with one faculty member, myself, and has grown into a program with an advisory committee of ten faculty members from different departments and two administrators that are upper echelons at the university. When we talk about funding we approximately get \$5,000 a year from endowments that we have to support the program so we do have to get another \$10,000 a year from student funding that’s usually through tuitions and fees. Students within the program, we usually always advise them to seek out scholarships and funding to offset additional costs. Also when we talk about logistics, if an institution has a “Domestic Programs” office, similar to an “International Programs” office, the office may be able to handle the logistical planning. As the program coordinator, a majority of the planning for student housing, identifying classroom space and also creating a travel plan for you to be able to go teach a class is up to you.

Recruitment for the program, it really depends on how you market the program. For myself it has not been difficult. Usually there always is students knocking on the door that want to participate. We usually enroll 15 students per summer. Throughout the academic year, we will hold two informational sessions about the program and also work with other on-campus communication sources to inform students about the program.

And then finally, as important it is to recruitment, on the back end it is also important to have relations with those alumni that come out of the program. Because those alumni and recent graduates of the program help identify jobs and assist with fundraising to support our endowment. Our alumni network has been sustained through the assistance of alumni in Washington D.C. and Lansing that meet once a month in what is referred to as a “caucus”. We call it the “Cardinal Caucus.” This network in both D.C. and Lansing help recent graduates with identifying jobs and networking. The alumni network also helps facilitate two fundraising events that we hold per year on-campus. The funds that are raised assist and support our fellowship programs, which offset the costs for both the Lansing and D.C. programs.

When we talk about our next steps of the program we begin to look at sort of how can we begin to create a programmatic step for our Center for Public Policy and Service. We’re going to begin to implement a leadership and service minor to hopefully begin to help students develop their skills in writing, communication, managing change; along with understanding ethics and culture. A program like this could really be started anywhere. A summer program does exist currently at University of Detroit Mercy and Central Michigan University does have a leadership program but it really doesn’t capture as University of Detroit Mercy would say so eloquently “the Jesuit mission of service learning and community engagement.”

So as we begin to wrap up we need to keep in mind these community development organizations do depend heavily upon volunteers and college interns period. These CDO’s do bring positive change to distressed communities and without the human capital they might not be able to bring about that positive change. As faculty members, college staff and leaders within CDOs; we should work to continue to develop programs that are making linkages between students looking for internships and the internship opportunities that are available with CDOs in distressed communities. Through these internships, students have stated that they have been able to improve their research skills, acquire content area experience and gained a better idea of where they wanted their career paths to go. Directors of CDOs in distressed communities have indicated that these skills are invaluable when college graduates apply for jobs with their organization. Without experienced staff, CDOs could lack the human capital to make a measureable impact. Therefore, we should work to develop programs that assist students with developing multiple skill sets that are valuable to CDOs. In Closing, as faculty, staff and leaders, I hope this this study can also help you as a guide to answer all questions that are commonly asked to me as an internship coordinator and faculty member.

And hopefully this will also start a conversation that assists you with creating an exciting and vibrant internship program that will assist with creating enthusiastic social entrepreneurs in our communities. And on that note I do thank you for participating in the webinar this afternoon and if anybody has any questions please feel free to ask them now or I can take them offline at either this phone number or the email address.

Jennifer Bruen: Thank you, John. If you would like to type your question into the chatbox we can read it from there. If you are unable to do that, I guess we are going to open it up. I'm thinking about opening this up because we have very few participants so it might be nice to allow questions to go over the phone as well. Yeah we have a few typing into the chatbox right now.

John Kaczynski: Thank you, Jill.

Jennifer Bruen: If you would like take your mute button off and ask your question directly to John, I think that we have a low participant group, a number of people that are participating; I think we can take questions on the phone too.

Female voice: So the question is "How do businesses benefit from internship opportunities?"

John Kaczynski: When we talk about businesses if we're looking at non-profit organizations or if we are looking at for profit organizations, from the non-profit side, as I mentioned earlier, they really do have few funding sources to be able to pay for human capital to move their mission and vision forward. So these interns, when you look at it from an economic standpoint, are free labor but at the same time, those organizations whether they are non-profit or for-profit do benefit having internships because when those interns do graduate and they are out into the workplace and these businesses are looking for employees to work in a specific skill-set these college graduates have had formalized through those internships to be able to fill those positions within the organization whether it is on the non-profit side or the for profit side. So I would say the businesses benefit from internship opportunities because they get qualified human capital and they have much more qualified pool of candidates when they have to interview them to work at their organization.

John Schweitzer: I have a question. Have you had a chance to follow up with your interns, those that have the experience and are out on the job market and have them assess what the impact of their internship has been on them? In particular, how frequently does it happen that the internship turns into a full-time job with the agency?

John Kaczynski: We had this past summer through our Lansing Living Leadership program we had a young man interning with the South Lansing Community Development Association and that internship did turn into a full-time job. It was

very interesting because he had graduated. It was very unique. Usually most of our interns are still in college, and he had just graduated in May, but he wanted to participate in this internship because he looked at it as a way into a full-time job. So he came down, did the class, and did the internship. Then in August when the internship was over, the executive director actually approached him and said you are doing such a great job, but I can't pay you much, but I can pay you this amount almost like a stipend and I can keep you in play for the next four months. Then she said, there might be funding opportunities that come up in January where I can keep you on. Luckily, that part-time position turned into a full-time position. So now he's there full time and that's on the non-profit side. On the political side, pretty much the majority of our students that have gone through the program; we just finished up our last program Friday night in Washington for 2012 and so we have got 47 graduates of the program and of the 47 graduates, 25 that have graduated (from college) and 24 of them are either employed in the endeavor that they went into that internship for, they're in law school, or they're in graduate school. So just measuring it from that standpoint, it's been very successful. We had two students last summer, there were two men who worked for the legislature. I was joking today, somebody called me and said "Do you realize that both of your students are campaign managers on the opposite sides, one is working for Republican one is working for a Democrat, in the state House race?" I found that very humbling to hear that students that last summer both walked into their first internship are now actually running campaigns for a state representative race. They do take a lot out of those internships and really run with them.

Jennifer Bruen: I would like to ask something that's related to what the question was about businesses. You mentioned that LINC has an incubator. I'm wondering are the interns involved in the administrative side of LINC or are they actually helping with the incubators, so are they learning any skills from the incubators themselves, those businesses that are starting up, and does that help them to get jobs through the businesses.

John Kaczynski: I know from conversations at LINC, they've got the VISTA. The interns are really doing a lot of the service/support side of the organization. On the economic, the incubator side, they do have a VISTA on that side. The VISTA is pretty much doing all of the day-to-day operations out of the incubator, so I'm sure the VISTA is getting some great service learning opportunities to actually put some of that experiential learning to use. But LINC is very unique because they have acquired over 100 properties on the south-side of Grand Rapids. Due to that acquisition of those properties, all of the funds and revenue that is generated from those properties supports the rest of the organization. So it's very unique and they've started up this incubator and now they're tearing down an old building and they want to put in loft housing down the street with businesses on the first floor. The first floor businesses will hopefully be spinoffs that come out of the incubator and fill up those store fronts. But the VISTA is helping coordinate a lot of that. So yeah.

Jennifer Bruen: I was just wondering what the transferrable skills that they learn that they can walk into a for-profit group and start with.

John Kaczynski: We have an endowment at Saginaw Valley through a financial firm down in Texas. Every year they always give us money back for the endowment because the most important skill-set that they say year after year after year, they're like "we have people coming out of the college of business do not have the writing skills that we need so we hire English majors instead." I was sort of always blown away when they tell us that but I sort of understand where they are coming from.

Female Voice: We have another question and it's asking "How long has the program been up and running?"

John Kaczynski: This will be year, well we had a pilot in 2008 and the program's been running, 9...10...11...12, so four years the program's been running, 5 years if you count the pilot. Before the pilot, we had a quasi-hybrid-program where it wasn't just a complete internship independent study. The students, we actually got together in an informal environment. There wasn't a class credit for it and we'd sit around exchange ideas, and allow them time to reflect and process about their internship and find out what was working, what wasn't working. When you usually bring 5-6 students around the table, some of them will think that they have a unique problem or a unique issue and as a typical undergrad student sometimes the drama will "come to the surface." Allowing them to sort of have that open dialogue to reflect and process, it lowers their anxiety, so they can begin to focus back on their task in the internship rather than some of those psycho-social issues that might have been bubbling to the surface. The program's been in place for about 5 years now, but I've really found out that it's a lot about the class but it's also about that out of classroom interaction that the students have that make that internship that much more worthwhile for them.

Female Voice: As a follow-up, has it grown over time with room for more students or interns?

John Kaczynski: We've actually, it's been very interesting; we've tried to cap the program at 15 students, just because of a couple different reasons, mainly logistical on the housing side. It's pretty hard to try to get 10 students housing together in Washington D.C. nonetheless 15. We have begun to talk about partnering with other universities. Right now we are looking at partnering with Central Michigan University and their Department of Political Science. The main reason we want to partner with them is because we are looking to expand the program outside summer. We're thinking about doing it year round. If we do decide to do it year-round we are going to need a much larger student participation rate. Instead of having 15 students a year, it would be going to 45 students a year.

John Schweitzer: What proportion of your students have gotten a paid internship as opposed to a partially paid or completely voluntary internship?

John Kaczynski: Maybe 5 or 10%. We're talking about on the political side, we talk about House of Representatives, Senate, Governor, they usually get a parking pass: "We can take care of your parking" or "We can take care of you, if you're driving back and forth from your institutional hub to help you put gas in your tank." Sometimes that's all the student wants. Then other times, "we can't pay you much but we'll give you a stipend for the summer, here's a stipend for \$1,000 to help you out with housing, etc." There was an article in the USA Today or New York Times about 6 months ago talking about the ethics behind unpaid internships and whether or not this is ethical. I don't want to digress too much I mean that's for a completely different panel, completely different conversation. But it is a question I continue to ask. Should we be paying these interns at least minimum wage? If we do that would there be internships? Would these organizations be able to survive?