

# The O'Donnell Center for Professional Development

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The Clay Center at VSB is home to the Charlotte and James V. O'Donnell '63 Center for Professional Development. The O'Donnell Center helps to deliver the Backpack-to-Briefcase curriculum, provides professional development coaching, coordinates experiential education initiatives, and works closely with VSB faculty, Centers of Excellence, business societies, and the Villanova Career Center to offer career education and employer programs that help students explore areas of interest and prepare for the business world. The O'Donnell Center also delivers the undergraduate Mentor Program.

## **Backpack-to-Briefcase Professional Development Curriculum**

Professional development is incorporated into the core business curriculum through our unique Backpack-to-Briefcase (B2B) program with required components starting in the first year through junior year. The Clay Center and O'Donnell Center collaborate with VSB faculty to deliver the program which combines class sessions and assignments that focus on an introduction to campus career resources, career exploration, developing internship/job search skills and development of soft skills. During the fall of the first year B2B requirements are embedded in the Business Dynamics course that is required of all VSB students, while during the spring semester B2B is delivered through a stand-alone course known as VSB 0099: First-Year Experience. As sophomores and juniors, students enroll in a one-credit B2B course each year (VSB 2000: Sophomore Professional Development Seminar and VSB 3000: Bartley BriefCASE Challenge.)

## **Career Education and Student Business Societies**

The O'Donnell Center for Professional Development collaborates with VSB academic departments and Centers of Excellence, student business societies, Villanova Career Center, and other campus offices to sponsor, co-sponsor and/or provide support to more than 100 career education events each academic year. The programs are designed to help students explore business career paths, connect with business professionals and employers, and build their networks. The programs are wide-ranging and include professional skill-building workshops, events highlighting specific industries/professions, employer information sessions, Bartley Takeovers hosted by corporate sponsors, and TREKS (corporate site visits.)

The O'Donnell Center collaborates with VSB's 30 student-led business societies and the Council of Presidents (student society oversight board) to assist the groups in establishing goals, as well as developing and hosting professional development programs and events. Involvement with business societies provides students with opportunities to connect with peers who share similar career interests and/or affinities. Additionally, membership may lead to leadership opportunities within the societies. Visit <https://bit.ly/vsbbusinesssocieties> for a complete list of business societies.

## **Experiential Education**

VSB recognizes the importance of students gaining "hands-on" experience prior to graduation as a critical element of their education, including as a means of applying theory to practice, clarifying career goals, and increasing marketability upon graduation. All VSB students are encouraged to pursue externships, internships, and/or CoOp opportunities. The O'Donnell Center collaborates with VSB academic departments to support business students who wish to earn (free elective) academic credit for approved business internships, as well as deliver the Spring Accounting Internship and CoOp

academic programs. Guidance on the search for opportunities is provided through Backpack-to-Briefcase courses, individual coaching appointments, and the O'Donnell Center Professional Development Workshop Series.

The O'Donnell Center collaborates with the VU Career Center and other campus partners to develop employer relationships and identify externships, internships, and CoOp programs that support students' interests. These opportunities are shared with students through Handshake, the campus career management portal, and promoted through other outlets.

### ***Internships/CoOps for Academic Credit***

Students may earn three **free elective credits** for participation in an approved business internship or CoOp. An academic internship or CoOp is a pre-professional work experience, sufficiently rigorous to qualify to earn credit, approved by VSB faculty, and administered through the O'Donnell Center.

- **Internships for Academic Credit**

During the fall and spring semesters, students have the opportunity to participate in academic internships on a part-time basis while simultaneously taking other courses. During the summer, students may choose to participate in an internship for academic credit on a part-time or full-time basis.

Students interested in receiving credit for a business internship must submit an on-line application through the "Experiences" section of Handshake. Once the application has been received, an O'Donnell Center professional will contact you to complete the internship course review and approval process.

- **Spring Accounting Internship (SAI) Program**

The SAI program enables students to obtain in-depth, practical exposure to the accounting and business environment during the "busy season." Students typically participate in the SAI program during their junior year. They work full-time at an accounting or related firm, earning six free elective credits for the internship course. The program is designed so that students retain full-time student status and remain on track to graduate in four years. To that end, students may take specifically designated classes during the spring semester and/or during the summer sessions immediately following SAI. The planning process for students interested in participating in SAI begins in the sophomore year and is facilitated by the O'Donnell Center in collaboration with VSB's Accounting Department.

- **Cooperative Education Program**

VSB's Cooperative Education Program (CoOps) provide students with the opportunity to experience complete immersion in a professional work environment, typically during the second semester of sophomore year or in the junior year. A CoOp experience is six months in length (fall: July-December; spring: January-June), during which time the student works at the sponsoring organization on a full-time basis. Work content mirrors that of an entry-level professional. Students earn six free elective credits for successful completion of a CoOp experience AND a competitive salary. Students maintain full-time student status and remain on track to graduate in four years by completing coursework during and before or after the CoOp assignment.

Students interested in participating in a CoOp must meet with an O'Donnell Center professional to complete the application and approval process. Additionally, students must submit resumes through "Handshake" to be considered for specific CoOp positions. The O'Donnell Center facilitates campus recruiting activities for CoOp programs at the beginning of each semester.

Academic credit is awarded for the defined CoOp programs supported by VSB. Currently approved CoOp programs listed below; see O'Donnell Center website for complete details:

- Bryant Park Capital Investment Banking (Finance) CoOp
- Cencora Supply Chain Finance CoOp
- Delaware County District Attorney's Forensic Accounting/Economic Crimes CoOp

- Johnson & Johnson Accounting/Finance CoOp
- Kenvue Consumer Brand Management (Marketing) CoOp
- Kenvue Consumer Customer Development (Marketing) CoOp
- SAP Customer Engagement Support Operations (MIS) CoOp

### **Eligibility Requirements for an Academic Internship/CoOp**

- Enrolled as a full time undergraduate VSB student or Business Minor
- Sophomore standing (minimum 30 credits)
- Minimum GPA of 2.5 for internships; minimum GPA of 3.0 for CoOps

### **Earning Academic Credit**

- Three (3) free elective credits may be earned per academic internship; six (6) free elective credits may be earned for a CoOp; six (6) free elective credits may be earned for the Spring Accounting Internship. The maximum number of credits that may be earned toward degree requirements is six (6) for two separate three-credit academic internships, one spring accounting internship (6 credits), or one CoOp experience (6 credits).
- Students may complete more than one internship for academic credit in the same academic discipline provided that the nature of the experiences is significantly distinct from one another (e.g., Sales and Marketing Research) as determined by the Chair of the sponsoring academic department.
- VSB Internship and CoOp courses fulfill free elective requirements and may not be used to fulfill major or minor requirements.
- Internships and CoOps are graded on a Satisfactory (“S”)/Unsatisfactory (“U”) basis.
- Monetary compensation for an internship/CoOp does not affect eligibility for receiving academic credit.
- Credit approval and course registration for an academic internship/ CoOp course must be completed before the internship/CoOp commences. Academic credit will not be awarded retroactively for an internship/CoOp.

#### **Internship Participation Course Registration Deadline**

Fall Semester	prior to start of internship or end of fall semester drop/add period, <b>whichever comes first</b>
Spring Semester	prior to start of internship or end of spring semester drop/add period, <b>whichever comes first</b>
Summer Semester	prior to start of internship or June 15, whichever comes first

### **Academic Internship/CoOp Course Requirements**

- **Time:**
  - **Internship:** Complete a minimum of 150 work hours over the course of a single academic semester OR a minimum 8 weeks **and** 150 work hours over the summer period.
  - **CoOp:** Complete a full-time (typically 40 hours/week), six-month assignment.
- **Launch Session:** Attend a mandatory group session prior to the beginning of the internship/CoOp.
- **Learning Objectives:** Establish, in conjunction with company supervisor, 3-4 Learning Objectives as a means of providing focus for the work completed during the internship/CoOp experience. The Learning Objectives should be connected to the National Association of Colleges & Employers (NACE) Career Readiness Competencies. The Learning Objectives form must be completed, initialed (by intern and company supervisor) and submitted via Blackboard within the first two weeks of the internship/CoOp experience.

- **Daily Activity Log:** Maintain a Daily Activity Log, including record of dates worked, number of hours completed, nature of projects, tasks, responsibilities, etc., relationship of activities to the Learning Objectives and how it meets the Learning Objectives and connects to the NACE Career Readiness Competencies. The Log must be initialed by the supervisor on a regular basis (i.e., once a week).
- **Final Paper:** Write a 10-12 page final paper documenting:
  - Describe the nature of the internship (i.e., responsibilities, projects, assignments, etc.)
  - What were your learning objectives at the start of your internship and how did you achieve them?
  - How did the internship relate to your past/future coursework?
  - Reflect on insights gained regarding the industry, profession, leadership styles, etc.
  - How can/will you apply your learnings to experiences in the future?
  - Did your internship experience help to focus or clarify your career goals? How so?
  - Read an excerpt about the NACE Career Readiness Competencies (see separate instruction doc for details). Select 3 career competencies and discuss how you utilized and refined these competencies during your internship. Be sure to cite 2-3 sample behaviors you practiced during your internship as well.
- **Evaluation:** Complete a Student Evaluation to help determine the effectiveness of the internship/CoOp experience, including assessment of work, quality of supervision, professional development, NACE career competencies, and the overall quality of the experience.
- **Communication:** Maintain communication with a designated O'Donnell Center professional throughout the duration of the internship/CoOp; keep the O'Donnell Center contact apprised of the experience including any issues, concerns, or problems that arise.
- **Submission Deadlines:** Completed Learning Objectives form is due via Blackboard within the first two weeks of the internship/CoOp. Due dates for submitting Daily Activity Log, Final Paper and Student Evaluation via Blackboard are:
  - Fall internship/CoOp: December 1
  - Spring internship/CoOp: May 1
  - Summer internship/CoOp: August 15

### **Withdraw/Termination of an Academic Internship/CoOp**

Students wishing to withdraw from the internship course must contact the designated O'Donnell Center professional prior to the withdrawal (WX) deadline. Deadlines for fall and spring semesters can be found in the Academic Calendar. Students withdrawing from a summer internship course must do so by July 1<sup>st</sup>. If a student withdraws from an internship in which the employer requires academic credit, the internship supervisor will be notified immediately of the withdrawal. Students who do not complete the academic internship requirements will be assigned a final grade of Unsatisfactory (U). Students who are terminated from their internship by the sponsoring employer during the course of the summer/semester may be assigned a final grade of Unsatisfactory (U).

Refunds as the result of official withdrawal from a summer internship course will be made according to the schedule listed below:

<u>Segment of the Semester</u>	<u>Refund</u>
Dropped within 24 hours of the internship start date	100%
After 24 hours of the internship start date	No Refund

### **International Internships**

Students are encouraged to engage in internships that are part of a study abroad experience; those experiences are managed by the Office of Education Abroad.

### **VSB Mentor Program**

The VSB Mentor Program brings VSB students and alumni volunteers together in one-to-one relationships to support students' career and professional development goals. Students are invited to participate in the Mentor Program during spring of sophomore year. All student mentees and alumni mentors opt in and are paired based on the student's primary career interests, desired work location,

and mutual areas of interest. Once paired, students will connect regularly with their mentors through graduation. Mentors share their knowledge and experience to support mentee's goals and professional development, building a bridge between the classroom and the professional world. You may learn more by attending one of the VSB Mentor Program Information Sessions offered regularly by the O'Donnell Center and/or visiting <https://bit.ly/vsbmentorprogram>.