

MSI-IIT internship program provides growth, opportunity to educate others

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involves a series of explosive chemistry experiments where the audience learns about matter, combustion, and chemical reactions.

The MSI-IIT internship partnership is now entering its 8th year. This partnership began with a common trustee between IIT and MSI, and the program aims to foster communication skills in students while making science education accessible to the community through the delivery of several fun and interactive live science demonstrations at MSI.

"I have been looking at the program since my freshman year," says Cassie Godette, 5th year physics major and 2014 MSI summer intern. "It's a little intimidating to do demonstrations in front of a ton of people, but it's really great once you try."

Christina Castillo, 4th year applied math major and 2014 intern, adds her thoughts about the feedback that volunteers and interns receive at the museum to help improve their programs. "In our shows, we learn how to give positive reinforcement and how to stay positive

with our guests. Those traits translate into the feedback we get from other facilitators at the museum. Our feedback is never negative; it's always positive and constructive. We always learn about what we do well and get suggestions on what to work on. There's always something that you do well and there's never a truly bad show. The museum is an awesome place to learn how to take feedback and practice presentation skills that you're going to need for the rest of your professional career."

"You learn how to present yourself so that people respect and listen to you," says Sany Nguyen, another 2014 MSI intern. "Think of it realistically; you're going to have to talk to people professionally, so you should do it here in the safe environment where there are people to help coach you"

Students who complete the internship and volunteership also report increased confidence, more comfort with public speaking, and positive experiences in working in a team.

Lynne Meyer, Director of the Office of

Spiritual Life and Service Learning here at IIT, who acts as the liaison between the museum and the university, also offers her wisdom. She says that the MSI volunteership and internship can be a positive and important experience for anyone, regardless of their major. "Whatever field you go into, you're going to have to communicate with people who are not in your area. Whether it's your boss, a customer, or a colleague in another department, being able to confidently and concisely explain difficult concepts to somebody who doesn't share your background is a real valuable skill."

The MSI Internship Program has become a highly competitive opportunity for IIT students over recent years. Meyer says there are usually over three times as many students applying than there are spots open for the volunteership portion of the program, so students should also remember not to get discouraged if they don't get selected on their first try. With so many passionate and qualified applicants, it is very difficult to narrow them

down to the 12 who are chosen to volunteer each semester. Although this program is a very unique partnership between MSI and IIT for undergraduate students, one should also know there are many other ways to volunteer within the museum if they'd like to have that experience. Students are also heavily encouraged to try again and apply in upcoming semesters should they not make it on their first try; several successful volunteers and interns in the program have applied more than once before being accepted to the volunteership.

In order to apply for the MSI-IIT volunteership and internship program, interested students can visit information sessions being held on Thursday, September 11, Friday, September 12, and Monday, September 15. All of the information sessions will be held in the Hermann Hall Crown Room at 12:50 P.M.. Contact Lynne Meyer at lmeyer2@iit.edu with any additional questions.

