EVERYONE WANTS MORE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

RICHARD DOMINIC WIGGERS
HEQCO’s research on WIL began in 2009

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Other partners

- Canadian Federation of Students (CFS)
- College Student Alliance (CSA)
- Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU)
- Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA)
- Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- York
HEQCO launched a seven year study of WIL

A team of researchers from Osgoode Law School is completing a HEQCO report on the legal aspects of WIL.
HEQCO’s internship report resulted in a manual

- “the design and delivery of student internship programmes varies significantly both within and across academic disciplines”
- It also “often overlooks important educational requirements outlined by experiential learning frameworks”
- Recommendation: “development and evaluation of an internship programme toolkit [to] provide stakeholders with tangible tools for implementing high-quality educational internships”

Source: G. Kerr et al., What is an Internship? Inventory and Analysis of “Internship” Opportunities Available to Postsecondary Students in Ontario (HEQCO: 2014).
Federal Budget (March 23, 2016)

- Youth Employment Strategy and Prime Minister’s Youth Council
- Increasing Co-op Placements and Strengthening Work Integrated Learning
- The Post-Secondary Industry Partnership and Co-operative Placement Initiative “will support partnerships between employers and willing post-secondary educational institutions to better align what is taught with the needs of employers, with a focus on high-demand fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics and business.”

Business Council of Canada, Business/Higher Education Roundtable (June 2, 2016):

- “A national campaign to promote the importance of WIL”
- Ensure that 100% of “Canadian postsecondary students benefit from some form of meaningful WIL before graduation”

Source: Business Council of Canada, “Every university and college student should have access to work-integrated learning, business and post-secondary leaders say” (June 2, 2016); Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Shared Responsibility (June 2016).
Ontario – Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel (June 23, 2016):

• “Expand experiential learning by ensuring that every student has at least one experiential learning opportunity by the end of high school and one opportunity by the end of post-secondary education.”

• “Encourage post-secondary institutions to allow and recognize longer (8-12 months) co-op placements, to better respond to business needs.”

New Brunswick Experiential Education Task Force (2016)

• “The purpose is to develop an implementation plan to significantly enhance the volume and quality of experiential education for students enrolled in New Brunswick’s four universities.”

Source: Business Council of Canada, “Every university and college student should have access to work-integrated learning, business and post-secondary leaders say” (June 2, 2016); Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Shared Responsibility (June 2016).
PART 1: REALITY CHECK
The media seeks a bleak future for PSE graduates
Thousands of jobs disappeared in 2008-09

Employment numbers and unemployment rate, Ontario, 15-24 years

Source: MTCU, data from Labour Force Survey.
How is “youth unemployment” being measured?

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table, Labour Force Survey (LFS) Estimates, Table 282-0002.
This was neither the first nor the worst recession
Are we over-marketing our PSE credentials?
One university has taken it to a new level

University of Regina Guarantee:

• Students agree to be assigned to a counsellor, to take job-training seminars, to volunteer or work and to maintain a minimum average.

• If they cannot find a job related to their field, with the university’s help, in the six months after they graduate, they will be given a year’s free tuition to come back and beef up on missing skills.
Some seem to view PSE credentials as job vouchers.
PART 2: GETTING THE TERMS RIGHT
In 2011 HEQCO formulated a WIL framework

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<th>Systematic Training</th>
<th>Structured Work Experience</th>
<th>Institutional Partnerships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workplace as the central place of learning</td>
<td>Familiarization with the world of work within a PSE program</td>
<td>PSE activities/programs to achieve industry or community goals</td>
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<td>Apprenticeships</td>
<td>Field Experience</td>
<td>Mandatory Professional Practice</td>
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What is important about WIL is the “I” (integration)

Council of Ontario Universities (COU):

“In an increasingly competitive job market, experiential learning makes students workplace-ready, setting them up for career success”

Classroom Learning + Real-Life Learning = Career Success

Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA):

“Experiential learning opportunities should not simply be an out-of-classroom experience alongside a theoretical course. To create the fullest impact for student learning, and skills development, the practical experience should be integrated into the academic curriculum so that students may compare theory and practice and take their learning with them into the workplace.”

The “integration” is the most important part of WIL

Five years ago I gave my first presentation on WIL

• “Today, Co-op programs have remained a force at relatively few schools – the University of Waterloo in Ontario, for one, still soldiers on with the world’s largest program”

• “Yet even these living models, directly descended from Schneider’s vision, have been eroded and transformed by the withdrawal of funding and faculty.”

• “Co-op programs nonetheless provided, and continue to provide, a powerful alternative to the no-holds-barred race for internships, for which they unwittingly set the stage.”

Protect the meaning of “CO-OP”?

There is a detailed definition that has been developed by CAFCE:

• The time spent in periods of work experience must be at least **30 per cent of the time spent in academic study**;

• Each work situation is **approved by the institution** as a suitable learning situation;

• The student is engaged in **productive work** rather than merely observing;

• The student receives **remuneration** for the work performed;

• The student’s progress on the job is **monitored by the institution** and supervised and evaluated by the employer.
Ontario high schools offer “Co-Op” opportunities

• “The Cooperative Education Program allows students to earn secondary school credits through a job placement.”

• “Over the years, the Cooperative Education Program has been promoted as potentially helpful to students who are disengaged, returning to school, or experiencing developmental delays.”

• “Many of the related reports we reviewed did not clearly document the link between the job placement and the course expectations. In a number of cases, students have earned or were earning credits for working in… clothing stores, fast-food outlets, coffee shops, grocery stores, etc.”


Ontario (2012): 9% of university and more than 54% of college co-op students reported that they were not paid
PART 3: WHY WIL MATTERS
Being “successful” in life is about more than grades

HEQCO study on “high achievers”:
• Often involved in student council, athletics, school clubs, working part-time, volunteering, writing for school newspaper or yearbook, acting as tutors, etc.

UBC applicants have to make a video “Personal Profile”:
• “gives you the opportunity to tell UBC about the things that are important to you, your significant achievements, what you’ve learned from your experiences, and the challenges that you’ve overcome.”

Employers want PSE credentials and work experience

**Level of PSE Required in Job Advertisements**

- **University or College (Indifferent):** 47%
- **University:** 22%
- **College Diploma:** 21%
- **Other (non-university):** 11%

**Job postings by minimum years of work experience**

- **No experience necessary:** 24%
- **<1 year:** 2%
- **1 to 2 years:** 14%
- **3+ years:** 14%
- **Duration not specified:** 6%

# Which Skills are Employers Looking For?

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Nearly 50% of university and 70% of college students reported some kind of WIL participation. The main motivations were to “gain practical work experience” and to “enhance my resume”.

PART 4: WIL FOR EVERYONE?
Do we want more WIL, or better WIL?

Harvey Weingarten, HEQCO blog (June 9, 2016):
• Employers need to articulate the skills they need developed
• PSE institutions must identify how we will measure those skills and evaluate whether they are actually acquired
• Identify best practices when developing WIL opportunities

Harvey Weingarten, HEQCO blog (July 19, 2016)
• “Hunting for Good WIL: Put Quality Before Quantity”
• “we need to refocus the WIL and EE conversation from counting to the far more fundamental question of why we are promoting these experiences in the first place”
There are already challenges finding placements

1. Ensuring **quality** placements for students
2. Finding **enough** placements for students
If you build it, they may not come.

Should we expect 100% participation in WIL?
Voluntary initiatives bring the keen; Making them compulsory may raise new challenges.

Those who show up may not most need the help
We could do more to teach CV/interview skills

Denise Lewis
123 Colorado St.
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(714) 770-3200
aronn@fullerton.edu

January 4, 2008
Brenda Couch, Recruiter
VANS
6550 Katella Avenue
 Cypress, CA 90630

Dear Ms. Couch:

I am responding to the Public Relations internship position that was recently posted on California State University, Fullerton’s Titan Connection jobs database. Currently, I am a senior majoring in Sociology and Public Relations with an anticipated graduation date of May 2008.

All of my life I have had a passion for the fashion industry and have always looked for ways to submerge myself in similar environments that mirror an industry that is versatile and fast-paced. A public relations internship position with VANS will help emphasize the skills learned and acquired through my academics and in my previous public relations internship position with Ghost Communications. My experience with a small public relations agency taught me the basics of public relations, such as writing press releases and media alerts, but most importantly it strengthened my interest in working for a larger, more sensitive company such as VANS.

In addition to my internship experience in public relations, my experience of over five years as a server has prepared me to work in a high-volume and fast-paced environment. Working as a server has equipped me with exceptional customer service skills and the ability to be flexible and adaptable. Flexibility, adaptability, and strong follow through are key strengths that will enable me to be successful as a public relations intern with VANS.

My previous experience in public relations along with my key strengths are well aligned with your public relations internship position. My schedule is flexible and I welcome an interview to further discuss how my skills and abilities closely match your internship position.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Denise Lewis

---

Summer Hagy
220 Park Avenue Suite 103, Chico, CA 95928
321-232-1234 • summerhagy@live.com

Summary of Qualifications:
- Strong customer service skills in a retail setting
- Computer and technology-oriented knowledge and support of email/IM products
- Knowledge of office products and procedures
- Young, energetic, detail-oriented work skills and enjoy working with numbers
- Excellent verbal, organizational, and communication skills
- Experience in voice processing and handle multiple tasks in a challenging environment

Education and Training:
- Sacramento City College, Chico, CA
  GPA 3.5/4.0
  September 2009
- Merritt College Community College, Chico, CA
  Bookkeeping Certificate
  May 2006

Skills Summary:
- Web: Windows Vista, Windows XP, Mac
- Access, PowerPoint, Word, Quicken, Excel, QuickBooks, Speedy, Quicken, QuickBooks
- Basic computer hardware assembly and component device replacement
- Strong troubleshooting and problem-solving skills
- Competent in spanish and understands Portuguese
- Proficient in NIKE and understand 0 key calculation skills
- Commercial driver license

Employment Experience:
Office Type: St. Cloud, MN
December 2006 - Present
- General Experience
  - Assisted customers with product selection and purchase, became a key resource for screening new lines
  - Provided translation assistance for Spanish-speaking customers, leading to an increase of business of over 5% per month.

St. Cloud Times: St. Cloud, MN
September 2007
- Newspaper Delivery Person
  - Assisted in delivering newspapers to a community of 65,000 people. Never missed a delivery date
  - Distributed newspapers by 9:00 a.m. as result of late arrival
  - Possess drive, standard accounts and pocketed newspapers

Hillside House Camp: Hillside, MN
Summer 2006
- Camp Counsellor
  - Conducted various activities such as swimming, track and basketball. Developed leadership and team building skills and was given Employee of the Year award.
  - Composed weekly newspaper on camp events and activities, gaining better exposure for the camp
We should truly recognize the value of WIL

For the typical Co-Op student with 4 x 4 months of full-time work experience, often with different employers...
A few concluding thoughts...

- Drop “Experiential” in favour of **WIL** and enforce the meaning of the term **Co-Op**
- Review existing WIL offerings and ensure they are being **done properly**
- Employers should expand the number and quality of their **WIL placements**
- Faculty could find other ways to introduce experiential learning **within courses**
- Students should gain experiences **outside of the classroom** beyond WIL
- Remind students that a PSE credential is not a **voucher** for or guarantee of a job
- PSE institutions should **not accept responsibility** for finding jobs after graduation
THANK YOU!!

RICHARD DOMINIC WIGGERS

richard.wiggers@mohawkcollege.ca