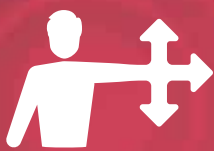




KNOWLEDGE



PERSONAL  
DEVELOPMENT



MENTOR

# APPA Student Internship Program

Enhancing Students' Futures by  
Expanding Their Facilities Network

*By Gig Supanichrattana, Mac Gao, and Kristie Toohill*



OPPORTUNITY



TRAINING



EXPERIENCES



SKILLS

**A**PPA is excited to partner with colleges and universities to make student internships even more purposeful and valuable. Many schools offer internships, but the APPA Student Internship Program will give undergraduate and graduate students more preparation and knowledge of educational facilities than a standard internship will. APPA's internship program has a solid structure that will help the host institutions and organizations deliver a successful internship and create a unique experience for the student interns.

The goal of the APPA Student Internship Program is to attract outstanding students from different schools to intern and get connected to APPA by applying for student membership at no cost. For those students who have no idea what educational facilities are about, APPA will be a welcome introduction. APPA believes it is necessary to build awareness more broadly and to present educational facilities as a viable, rewarding, and meaningful career path, by keeping students engaged and allowing them to be placed with the right people.

### PILOTING THE APPA STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The APPA Student Internship pilot program was launched in summer 2018 as part of continuing efforts to engage the next generation of leaders in educational facilities and to expand their facilities network through connecting with APPA. Grand Valley State University and Illinois State University voluntarily participated in the pilot program this past summer and throughout the fall semester. During the pilot program, students had the opportunity to apply their knowledge to real-world situations and to develop the skills required for their future careers. Host institutions also benefited through new technologies and innovative ideas from the student interns.

### WHAT MAKES THE APPA STUDENT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM DIFFERENT?

APPA has established strong foundations for the framework of the APPA Student Internship Program and provides many useful tools to help participants complete it successfully. APPA made this program as simple and straightforward as possible in order to serve the needs of the program participants. Standards and guidelines are framed by clear goals to assure the quality of the program.

APPA has considered what will bring real benefit to the students and employers involved in the program, and has integrated those elements. Program interns will get hands-on experience through participating in APPA activities and be able to build connections with facilities professionals. The host institution will also be able to focus on building a facilities network between the students, their institutions, and APPA.

“For employers, internships can be a great way to take individuals on a ‘trial run’ to see how they change the company culture, make sure they fit in well with the existing group, and see how they work.”

— Nicole Smartt Serres,  
*Forbes Human Resources Council*

### HOW TO JOIN

It is easy to participate in the APPA Student Internship Program, and members can post and view internships at no cost.

APPA members are encouraged to participate by posting student internships for summer and fall 2019. Follow the steps below:

- Step 1: Download and review the internship guidelines
- Step 2: Download and review the checklists
- Step 3: Check out the APPA resources
- Step 4: Post and find APPA internship opportunities

According to a survey completed through the **National Association of Colleges and Employers in 2018**, those surveyed who completed at least one internship received a job offer more quickly and had a higher first-position salary than those who did not.

For more detailed information about the internship program, visit the APPA Student Internship Program webpage at <https://www.appa.org/JobExpress/internships.cfm>.

# JOIN THE CHALLENGE

Through APPA Student Internship Pilot Program



**Meet Bennet Krull, APPA Student Intern** (above left)  
*Major in Renewable Energy*  
**Office of Sustainability, Energy Management**  
**Illinois State University**

As a rising senior, I had the great opportunity to collaborate with the Director of Sustainability, Missy Nergard, on a campus map project as part of my independent study. A strong relationship was established with my supervisor, so I was offered

**“My involvement with the Office of Sustainability has taken my college experience from just an academic level to a career jump-start level.”**



an internship opportunity to continue working on sustainable projects. My favorite part of the internship and of working here is the freedom to work on projects that interest me. Being allowed to work on energy savings and sustainability projects that benefit Illinois State keeps me motivated each and every day. One of the main projects was working on the parking garage lighting improvement. I conducted research in sustainable lighting to prepare a proposal and worked with various departments to make this sustainability idea a reality on campus. The funding was awarded to upgrade existing lighting with LED, which reduces energy consumption by 50 percent. This internship has benefited me by allowing me to explore how sustainability can have a positive impact on a college campus and how important it is for people to practice it.



**Meet Igwe Nyeche, APPA Student Intern** (above left)  
*Major in Occupational Safety and Health Management*  
**Facilities Management**  
**Grand Valley State University**

My experience as a safety manager intern at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) was astounding. The amount of knowledge I gained and the opportunity for hands-on involvement in the field was truly priceless. Being able to work under David Cox, the safety manager at Grand Valley, taught me a variety of skills that relate to my occupational safety and health (OSH) management major. Some examples include learning about industrial hygiene, participating in a smoke-testing exercise in the GVSU football center to help find the source of a foul odor, fire-safety familiarity, and learning on how to extinguish a fire using a BullEx mechanism. I gained valuable real-world experience under Mr. Cox by having the opportunity to develop and assign safety



**“The skills I acquired during my internship at GVSU were instrumental in my development as a promising OSH major and a future safety manager.”**

training programs for GVSU maintenance workers, perform follow-up work with online training, and keep track of their progress on recorded documents. I also conducted building inspections, and I checked for unsafe conditions or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues around the campus and developed a log to keep track of these situations for reinspection.

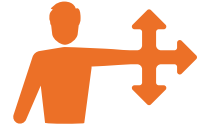
# INTERNSHIP SUCCESS

*From Student Intern to Full-Time Employee*



**“I am extremely fortunate and honored to work alongside a talented and inspiring group of people that are dedicated to transforming the facilities of our future leaders.”**

**T**he digital multiplex (DMX) lighting controls project for the library tower was my favorite project during my internship. I successfully implemented an ergonomic design that provides remote controls for the library tower lights through a cloud platform. In addition to the library tower project, I analyzed the effect of fouled heat exchangers and how they impact our chilled-water distribution system. I also



completed an APPA survey study demonstrating the oversizing requirements of building transformers and the potential to reduce the cost of electrical systems. I really enjoyed being able to go out in the field and understand the complexity and diversity of all the different mechanical systems. During the internship, I learned the steps involved in designing and coordinating technical projects; but most importantly, I was able to understand the importance of leadership in the management of an educational institution. After the internship, I stayed to become a full-time employee, because the challenges met by educational facilities inspired me, and I knew that I could make a positive contribution to this industry with the guidance of my mentor, David Handwork (above, right).

—**Jonathan Howard**, Facilities Engineer and Energy Conservation Manager, Arkansas State University

**I**nterning at Illinois State University Facilities Management Department has been such a rewarding and incredible experience for me. As a project management intern, I was able to work on many projects. One of the main projects I helped with was being part of the data team to complete the APPA Facilities Performance Indicators (FPI) Survey. I applied the knowledge and skills I learned in classes to develop a data collection plan and to perform data analysis. Through this internship, I found numerous opportunities to allow my skills to shine and to develop new ones, such as teamwork, leadership, and communication. Having this internship ignited my passion to learn more about facilities and had a profound effect on my decision to pursue a career in education facilities. Thanks to my successful internship, aligned with the department’s goals and strategic plan, the department saw the value of bringing an intern into full-time employment. I feel very privileged to receive this opportunity after the internship prepared me to be in this position.



**“It was a great internship for me, because I had opportunities to grow not just professionally as an intern, but as a person.”**



—**Mac Gao**, Project Development and Data Administrator, Illinois State University

# INTERNSHIP SUCCESS

*From Student Intern to Full-Time Employee*



**“This internship was a rewarding experience that offered me a new set of skills and prepared me to comfortably step out of my academic world into my desired career path.”**



I had no clue what facilities are all about until I began connecting with facilities by starting an internship that was being offered. As an intern with facilities management, my primary responsibilities were assessing the department’s business operations and determining how they could improve. The most memorable part of my internship was when I led the e-material checkout project. The initiative changed from manual data entry to electronic data processing through the use of iPads with the mobileTMA GO app. The internship gave me the opportunity to not only put my project management knowledge into practice, but to gain deeper insights into the facilities industry, which helped me significantly with my career planning. Besides being a regular student intern, I also got involved with APPA through participating in the Supervisor’s Toolkit, where I developed relationships and built connections with facilities professionals. I was offered a full-time position, and I have now become a new “family member” of facilities services at Illinois State.

—**Gig Supanichrattana, Data Analyst, Illinois State University**

# INTERNSHIP STORIES

*From APPA Member Institutions*

When I first began my journey in the facilities management world, I was unsure of the professional experience I would gain. I began as an intern with maintenance services at Western Michigan University (WMU). As a student majoring in communication studies, I did not know what role I would fulfill. It has now been close to four years since I began the journey, and I can confirm that my time in facilities management has allowed me to grow immensely in my career. As an intern, I worked on a number of projects, varying from creating an onboarding program for employees to assisting with workplace-culture

initiatives. The most impactful project I worked on was sitting on the core committee to host the MiAPPA (Michigan APPA) conference at WMU. In



this role, I organized the entertainment for the banquet night, and managed all the communication and marketing materials delivered to prospective attendees and then to the attendees themselves. My time working in facilities management has allowed me to become a more effective communicator and recognize the various factors that affect how a message is received. I am now aspiring to a full-time position with facilities management at WMU, as I graduated in spring 2018. While continuing my work after graduation, I have been able to build a social media initiative from the ground up, allowing our campus community to gain knowledge of what facilities does for the university. While much of the work is done in the background, being a part of that work and knowing the effect it has on the campus community is both exciting and fulfilling.

—**Laura Kirkendall, Service Center Representative Western Michigan University**

**“I will always be grateful for the opportunities and connections I have gained from my intern experience.”**



# INTERNSHIP STORIES *continued*

## *From APPA Member Institutions*

**W**hen entering my first semester of graduate school, I was informed about an internship in the Maintenance Services division of the facilities management department at Western Michigan University. Once I was settled in and had an understanding of the organization, I was assigned my first big project. I had a long meeting with my predecessor and my supervisor, discussing how we could reduce workplace injuries. I was excited when I received the project, because I finally had an opportunity to apply the knowledge I learned in the classroom to the real world. After I fully understood the issue at hand, I began doing research on different solutions until I discovered one that would be fitting for our organization and culture. From the research, I developed the idea for “Toolbox Talks,” which is a safety-awareness application that can be accessed via iPads assigned to employees for logging issues

and concerns and assisting them with their work. When we started the implementation, I was nervous because we did not have immediate success. Yet, after a few months of running the program and helping everyone understand how to use it, we started to see improvements. After two years, we saw a significant difference in the reduction of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) injuries. Due to the positive results, I was offered the unique experience of attending and presenting on the safety program at the MAPPA (Midwestern Region of APPA) conference. The project was an amazing learning experience, because I was able to see the program built from the ground up, something interns don’t typically see. Not only did I learn a lot from this project, but it also gave me the needed experience to receive a position in my desired field right out of school. 💰

“It is important to offer students real-world opportunities while studying; many times this is lacking in their classes. It’s during their internship that they develop the relationships that provide them employment opportunities immediately after graduation.”

—**Anand K. Sankey**, Director of Maintenance Services, Western Michigan University



“The internship helped me in many ways and I am very thankful for the time spent at WMU Maintenance Services.”

—**De’Lon Dixon**, Facilities Management Student Intern, Western Michigan University

Former intern Gig Supanichrattana is a data analyst in the facilities department at Illinois State University in Normal, IL; she can be reached at [tsupani@ilstu.edu](mailto:tsupani@ilstu.edu). Mac Gao, also a former intern, is project development and data administrator at Illinois State, and can be reached at [hmgao@ilstu.edu](mailto:hmgao@ilstu.edu). Kristie Toohill is director, facilities management, also at Illinois State, and can be reached at [klander@ilstu.edu](mailto:klander@ilstu.edu). Gig and Mac assisted Kristie and a team of APPA members and staff to develop the APPA Student Internship Program. This is Gig’s and Mac’s first article for *Facilities Manager*.