Section 1:  EXTERNSHIP:  GREAT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
-What is an externship and why participate?
The College’s Extern Program is a one week, job shadow, alumni/student mentoring experience. Students have the opportunity to explore career fields, apply academic interests, develop professional knowledge and learn from Swarthmore alumni and parents who have volunteered to be workplace and/or homestay mentors.

-How old is the program and how many Swatties have benefited from it?
The term externship was coined here at Swarthmore. The program was initiated on a smaller scale over 40 years ago by a Swarthmore alumnus. It’s existed in its current form for about a decade and has helped thousands of students explore career options. Career Services relies on a vast network of alumni, parents and past externs to keep the program going.

-How do I apply and am I guaranteed to get an externship?
Registration for the program is done entirely through mySwarthmore. During registration students log in and review all of the available externships. Career Services advertises registration dates through the RSD and Handshake; registration occurs just after fall break.

Students are not guaranteed a match. The lottery system used for the matching process affords every registered student a chance at being matched. Students who choose 4 opportunities during registration will have a greater chance at being matched than will the student who expresses interest in only one opportunity, so we do encourage you to be open to a diverse array of opportunities and locations, if possible.

Section 2:  ORIENTATION:  ATTEND IN ORDER TO REGISTER
Orientation sessions are held at ongoing times throughout the beginning of October. The session will last about 20 minutes. Check Handshake, RSD or Career Services Office (Parrish 135) for details.

Section 3:  REGISTRATION:  BE OPEN TO CONSIDERING VARIOUS OPTIONS
-How do I register?
Registration for the program is done entirely through mySwarthmore. During registration students log in and review all of the available externship opportunities. Hopefully you will see a few that sound interesting. Submit your contact information, resume, goals for the externship experience and indicate up to four opportunities in which you have an interest.

At the close of the registration period, a computerized lottery will be run to match students with alumni mentors.

-When is the deadline?
After fall break. Career Services advertises the lottery sign-up on its website, through Reserved Student Digest and Handshake.

-How do I get matched?
The process has two rounds:
Round I is an online lottery system.
Round II – (Open only to students registered for, but not matched in Round I) In this round, students are encouraged to reexamine the remaining opportunities available and indicate up to four opportunities in which they may have previously overlooked in Round I. If they see something they would like, they are invited to come in during the “Round II” first-come-first-serve matching process.

-What if I still don’t get matched?
In early November we will host a workshop for all students (both registered and unregistered) who are still interested in finding an externship. In addition, Career Peer Advisors as well as Career Counselors are always available to work individually with students who are not matched in either the first two rounds on strategies for creating their own externships including at a different time, such as fall break, or a different location, such as their own home town.

Section 4:  YOU’VE BEEN MATCHED:
COMMUNICATION IS KEY!
-What do I do now?
First you must confirm through mySwarthmore that you are accepting your externship and clarify your need for housing.

Communicate with your Mentor!! Reach out by phone, introduce yourself and express your gratitude for the opportunity that they will be sharing with you over winter break.

COMMUNICATION:  TIPS AND TIMELINES:
November: Phone your host/mentor(s). Get to know each other, talking about academic and career goals, career information, experience needed in the field.
December: Call by phone again and reconnect. Reflect on Fall semester classes, clarify plans for the week you’ll spend together.
Spring: Follow up with your Extern mentor(s) to share ways you’ve incorporated the career and life knowledge they shared into your life so far.
Summer: Phone or in person follow up. Touch base as it relates to summer jobs, internships and volunteering; particularly asking about workplace culture and transition from school to work.
Section 5: HOUSING: MORE COMMUNICATION!

How and why is housing available?
Housing is limited to the extent that alumni are willing to host current students. Homestay mentors are alumni or parents who generously offer housing, giving students an opportunity to explore opportunities in other cities. We encourage you to find your own housing by contacting family and friends first, so we can offer homestays to other students who cannot find their own housing.

Does it cost anything?
Externs are unpaid learning opportunities. You are responsible for the cost of transportation (plane ticket, public transportation to the workplace each day). Some homestay mentors will expect that you buy your own food and do your own cooking. Be clear you understand your homestay mentor’s expectations of you so you can better understand and anticipate the cost of your externship. If it is a hardship for you to pay for travel, please contact the Dean’s office. There may be limited funding available from the Dean’s Office.

How do I sign up for a homestay?
After you have accepted an externship offer that requires housing, there will be a place on the online form for you to indicate housing needs. If you know you will need housing, indicate yes on the form. If you’ve contacted your family and friends in the area first and found housing, indicate no. If you first put yes that you need housing, then find your own housing, please let us know so we can open up that homestay for another student. In Philadelphia, there is the option to stay in the dorms or with a homestay mentor. Housing is contingent upon the generosity of alumni and cannot be guaranteed.

What if I can’t find housing in the city of my externship?
Career Services works closely with you and alumni to find housing. Don’t wait long after contacting friends and family to contact us. Securing housing often takes time and the longer you wait to contact us, the fewer options you will have.

What if I have allergies?
The online lottery form will ask you about allergies and/or other special requirements (such as diet or medical concerns) which we then share with your homestay mentor.

How should I thank my Homestay Mentor?
It is recommended to bring a small house-warming gift to show your gratitude for your host’s generosity. Please also send your host a thank you note after you leave to show your appreciation.

Section 6: EXTERN WEEK: PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE IS KEY!!

How should I connect with my Workplace Mentor prior to the externship?
Make a follow up phone call or email your workplace mentor to finalize and confirm your time and date of arrival. Also ask if there is anything you can do prior to arrival to facilitate your project or their work.

What sort of research should I do prior to meeting my workplace mentor?
Ask if there are any articles your workplace mentor would like you to read. You will also want to research the firm or agency to have a general idea of where you are going.

What should I wear?
Business attire, unless you have been told otherwise by your workplace mentor. (Business attire generally translates into khakis, dress pants or skirt with a collared shirt, blouse or sweater. Do not wear jeans, t-shirts or sneakers unless the mentor has indicated that it is a very casual environment).

What should I bring to my first day?
Bring a portfolio (or at least a notepad and pen) to jot down any questions. Consider bringing a copy of The Phoenix to update your workplace mentor on what is happening on the Swarthmore campus. Do all you can to be professional – don’t forget that you are in a work environment and professional behavior is expected. This means that you should be on time for all appointments, be well-groomed, and be ready to participate. Your workplace mentor will most likely give you a small project your first day, so be ready to work on any project your mentor has for you – all work is good work.

How can I thank my Workplace Mentor at week’s end?
Your workplace mentor has put in a lot of planning to make your schedule work for the week – clearing your presence with their management, setting up meetings for you, etc. Please consider reciprocating their generosity with a small gift if possible. Usually something Swarthmore-related is always appreciated. Please remember to send a thank you note to your workplace mentor after you leave. (See example on the next page)

Section 7: EXTERN TIPS: MAKING CONNECTIONS FOR YOUR FUTURE

Think about your extern workplace mentor as a sort of life coach – ask lots of questions regarding life after Swarthmore, finding a job, tips on how to work well in an office setting, etc. Ask for suggestions as to how you can better prepare yourself for life after Swat and for your career. Ask for constructive criticism toward the end of the week after your mentor has had the opportunity to observe your work and ability to interact with other employees. If you enjoyed your externship and would like to extend the experience, ask your workplace mentor if they would be willing to sponsor you for a summer experiential
Dear [extern mentor],

I hope you and your students are doing well. I just wanted to write to let you know that the lessons I learned, and the experiences I had, during my week at [your school] this past winter have continued to shape my outlook on education, especially concerning one of my current courses, Language Minority Education. While I have already mentioned [your school] on several occasions both in class and in one-on-one conversations with my professor, next week’s topic of discussion revolves around parent involvement, and I immediately thought of the [school newsletter] articles you shared with us on the subject during the first day of our externship. Acting on that thought, I e-mailed the articles to the professor for consideration, and just a few moments ago, she wrote back to say that she wanted to add them to our readings for next week. She was thoroughly impressed!

As mentioned above, this is only the latest in a series of cases where [your school] has had the opportunity to enter the dialogue in Language Minority Education. Just this past week, we were talking about the importance of professional collaboration and a positive relationship between teachers and administrators, and how both of those might be achieved. Throughout the discussion, I had the professional development and literacy team meetings I attended in my head as a model, and those mental images were very helpful for visualizing how the research-practice gap might be traversed with respect to those issues.

Thank you again for a wonderful experience, and know that the knowledge you and your colleagues imparted is continuing to be of immense value.

Sincerely,

[Swarthmore student extern]