

Realizing Leadership through Service Learning

2006 AECT Interns

Two years after their internship experience Allen, Mims, Roberts, Kim and Ryu (2004) reflected that “AECT collectively recognizes that new ideas, energy and leadership need to be infused into the system constantly, and that the internship is one of the sources for the new” (p. 44). In their book *Where’s the learning in service learning?*, Eyler and Giles (1999) define service learning as a form of experiential education where learning occurs as students individually or collaboratively use their knowledge and skills to actively help a community or professional organization. Since the annual convention in Dallas, we, the AECT Interns—Class of 2006, have endeavored to use the internship as a service learning experience to bring new ideas and leadership to AECT as a way to strengthen the organization.

Twelve months ago, we outlined a plan for our activities over the coming year (see 2006 AECT Interns, 2007a). In that article, we discussed our plans to create a Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) for AECT. In May 2007 the Board of Directors accepted our proposal and we, then the current class of interns, began to serve as the first executive committee of this new body. In the September/October issue of *TechTrends* we described the goals for this new graduate student group and encouraged others to become involved in the GSA (see 2006 AECT Interns, 2007b). As the first executive committee of the GSA, we were responsible for the organization of the Graduate Student Lounge at this year’s annual convention in Anaheim, California, along with recruiting students to run for the 2007-08 executive.

We are pleased to report that, since the conclusion of the Anaheim meeting, the 2007-08 executive committee under the leadership of President Brooke Robertshaw has been in place and busy recruiting students to run for the 2008-09 executive.

The second goal of the 2006 Intern Class was to support the AECT Foundation’s Capital Campaign. We began working towards this goal in the March/April issue of *TechTrends*, by outlining how the Foundation’s awards have impacted various leaders within AECT and have impacted us, by making a collective pledge to the *Capital Campaign* as an intern class, and by challenging other former and future classes of interns to follow our lead (see 2006 AECT Interns, 2007c). We followed up on this general plea with individual letters that we sent to each of the former AECT interns since 1996 (and even some pre-1996 interns that we were able to identify) in April and again in September.

Outside of our collective activities, each of us has been busy becoming involved in individual activities within AECT. For example, Tonya Amankwatia has served on the AECT Foundation’s membership committee and has been working to strengthen connections between that committee and the newly formed GSA. Michael Barbour has been a member of the electronic services committee which has led to him serving as an administrator for the new GSA and Intern blogs and an author for the new *aect-now.org* website. Fethi Inan has been busy as a member of the communications team of the Teacher Education Division (TED), a highly interactive division communicating with members through newsletters, their blog titled “The TED Playground,” a Facebook group, etc. Preston Parker was the primary organizer for the Graduate Student Lounge at the 2007 convention and also served on four different AECT committees. Patricia Slagter van Tryon has taken an active role in the TED’s new “Outreach” initiative designed to involve classroom teachers more in AECT. In addition, we have reviewed conference proposals, delivered conference presentations in Anaheim, and written four articles for *TechTrends* (including this one).

In their *TechTrends* article, the 2002 Class of AECT Interns indicated that they felt the AECT internship experience was rather difficult to capture.

They made this statement because they believed that “[they] did not know exactly at the time where the experience was leading [them]” (Allen et al., 2004, p. 44). As we reflect upon the last twelve months, our own experience as interns has taught us a great deal about AECT, leadership and ourselves. Along this journey we believe that our new energy and ideas have actively helped the AECT Foundation in their Capital Campaign, graduate students have formal representation in AECT through the GSA, and in other positive ways. For us, the internship experience led us on a path of service to the AECT Foundation and to AECT—that has left both the organization and us stronger because of it.

Strohbehn Intern

Preston Parker –
Utah State University

Cochran Interns

Tonya Amankwatia –
Lehigh University
Michael Barbour –
University of Georgia
(now Wayne State University)
Fethi A. Inan –
University of Memphis
(now Texas Tech University)
Patricia J Slagter van Tryon –
Lehigh University

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