

New program will make it easier for college students to find paid internships in STEM fields

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Starting next summer, college and university students majoring in science, engineering, technology and math (STEM-related fields) will have a free new resource for 2013 internships.

The Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program offers a no-cost, centralized, online application system that allows students majoring in these subjects to search and apply for paid, STEM-related summer internships with Virginia companies.

The program, announced Thursday at a breakfast meeting of the Northern Virginia Technology Council, also will provide Virginia companies with free access to a large, statewide pool of qualified students for summer internships. Students will be able to provide one comprehensive application that can be reviewed by potentially hundreds of companies throughout the state.

“The Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program (CSIIP) will help to prepare our students for the high-quality, high-paying jobs of the future. By better aligning higher education and the business sector, we are working to give every Virginian graduate a path to success,” Gov. Bob McDonnell said in a statement.

The program follows passage of the governor’s “Top Jobs” legislation by the 2011 General Assembly. The education reforms focused on the need to train and retain more STEM workers in the commonwealth to fill 21st century jobs and called for the creation of a STEM public-private partnership. “CSIIP will help to close the gap between the needs of employers in high growth fields like science, technology, engineering and math and the skill sets of our new graduates,” said

Secretary of Technology Jim Duffey.

With funding from the state, the Virginia Space Grant Consortium (a coalition of Virginia higher education schools, two NASA centers and state educational agencies) created the program in partnership with Virginia's regional technology councils. The councils will serve as a conduit to member companies who will register and post internships. Participating companies will be able to search the applicant pool via a search and sort tool. They will make selections, interview, and hire students directly. Hourly rates will be determined by the company, but a minimum rate has been established.

Companies doing business in Virginia can register and list internships at the CSIIP online site and are encouraged to do so before Oct. 31. The application process will be opened to students on Nov. 1. Student applications are due on Jan. 31, 2013, and the application database will be opened to participating companies on Feb. 11, 2013.

The program is open to full-time, undergraduate students taking at least 12 credit hours per semester at an accredited Virginia university, college, or community college or an accredited out-of-state college or university. Students must be at least 18 years of age, and majoring in STEM disciplines. Before starting their summer 2013 internship, they must have completed at least 30 or more post-secondary education credits and must be at least a rising sophomore.

Seniors graduating at the end of the spring semester 2013 also are also eligible to participate. Students must have a grade point average of at least 2.7 on a 4.0 scale, and must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.

Source: <http://www.viriniabusiness.com/index.php/news/article/new-program-wil>

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