Building Bridges: 
Broader Impacts, Career Perspectives, and the PROMISE Internship Experience

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The Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning

The Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning, located in Weniger Hall, works to enhance understanding of how diverse individuals become lifelong STEM learners, practitioners, and researchers.

Broader Impacts: What and Why

As required by the National Science Foundation, all grant recipients must conduct activities indicating or supporting the positive connection of their research to some aspect of society—generating, if you will, a broader impact (BI).

BI activities can be inherent in research, or can be something as common as science education outreach. However, there is a misconception among many researchers that BI is only educational outreach. My purpose during this internship is to counter that notion through media publications focusing on innovation and imagination in BI outreach and engagement. My hope is to highlight points along the diverse spectrum of activities that researchers can engage in.

Who I Am

- PROMISE media and communications intern @ the Center for Research on Lifelong STEM Learning.
- Recent graduate with a B.S. in cultural anthropology.
- Interested in the ways in which diversity is supported within higher education.
- Curious about the ins-and-outs of working in university administration.
- An aspiring “Jill of all Trades” – I love learning and acquiring a range of new skills.

Finding the Intersection

What I least expected coming into this internship is that it would allow me to explore an intersection of career paths that I’d never imagined before. Although I most strongly identify academically as an anthropologist, my experience in the science and education fields also served me well as I navigated articles, interviews and meetings on STEM-Ed related topics. Realizing the amount of interdisciplinary overlap that occurs in the STEM Center’s work has inspired me to seek out other intersections in disciplines that align with my purpose and academic goals.

Accomplishments

- Interviewed 6 individuals on their experiences with broader impacts.
- Wrote 3 articles highlighting diverse approaches to broader impacts.
- Wrote 1 article highlighting a project affiliated with the center.
- Designed and created new signs and door tags for the center.
- Explored numerous aspects of planning and approach to higher education administration.

Final Reflections

At times challenging, this PROMISE internship pushed me outside of my comfort zone, asking me to utilize my strengths like never before. It also allowed me to try out journalism— an opportunity I’m sure would have never arisen in my life had I not taken this job. I am grateful for both the support of my mentors as well as my peers.