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# Evaluation of a Criminal Justice Internship Program: Why Do Students Take It and Does It Improve Career Preparedness?

*Matthew L. Hiller, Christopher Salvatore and Travis Taniguchi*

The internship program in the Department of Criminal Justice, Temple University, is designed to help students: determine their career interests, learn factual and procedural information from practitioners, build relationships that facilitate career opportunities, and to smooth the school-work transition. The current study is an evaluation of this internship program and aimed to determine whether the program increased career preparedness. Surveys of students involved in the internship program were conducted at the beginning and end of the program. Students in other non-internship criminal justice courses completed a similar survey and serve as the comparison group. Results suggest that, relative to the non-internship group, some aspects of career preparedness improved for the interns. However, not all results were in the direction hypothesized. In particular, students' locus of control, for both internship and non-internship groups, became more external as students' perceptions that career choice was subject to luck and the influence of powerful others increased.

## Introduction

A recent national survey of 99 criminology and criminal justice departments at four-year colleges and universities showed that the majority (87.8%) included an internship experience as a part of the curriculum they offered their undergraduate students (Stichman & Farkas, 2005). Most internship programs (73%) enrolled 20 or fewer students in an average academic semester, required the student be a major (82.6%), had a minimum GPA (75.3%) as an eligibility criterion, allowed only juniors or seniors to enroll (81.2%), and had a formal application process for the internship (64.3%). Like this national profile, the Temple University Department of Criminal Justice also includes an internship program as an optional experiential educational experience for its students.

Within liberal arts, internships may be dismissed as an unnecessary component of the student's education because the overarching purpose of

their education is to teach them core competencies like critical thinking, problem solving, learning skills and information synthesis, and communication skills, and it is explicitly not for the purpose of gaining skills related to a specific occupation like profession-oriented departments might have (e.g. Nursing, Social Work). In essence, liberal arts departments teach people to think (Stone & McLaren, 1999). Extending this logic, internships within liberal arts departments should emphasize pedagogy that allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to their lives in the “real world.”

However, from the perspective of many students and their parents, internships are important opportunities for gaining experience that will help one to begin one’s professional career upon graduation (Ross & Elechi, 2002). Indeed, numerous benefits for students are attributed to internships, including helping students to determine their interests in a particular areas, to learn factual and procedural information from professionals typically not a part of the classroom experience, to build relationships and relationship skills and foster personal growth that will can facilitate getting a job/career related to their experience, and to smooth the school-to-work transition (Stichman & Farkas, 2005; Stone & McLaren, 1999). Often, because it is easier to assess than core competencies, evaluations of internship programs focus on the influence of these programs on career preparedness. For example, Neapolitan (1992) administered the Career Decision Scale to 30 students, both before and after their internship. Findings showed that students gained clarity and confidence as well as reduced their levels of anxiety related to choosing a career.

Building on this extant literature, and because the Temple University Department of Criminal Justice internship program had not yet previously been examined; a rigorous quasi-experimental design was used in the current study (a) to determine what factors influenced students’ decision to participate in the criminal justice internship program and (b) to determine whether it had an influence on the students’ perceptions of their level of career preparedness. It was hypothesized that students would report the need for career-relevant experience, personal growth, and perceived ease of the course as primary reasons for deciding to take the internship. It also was hypothesized that those in the internship program would gain greater insight into the career planning process, improve their career decision self-efficacy, and feel greater empowerment over their career plans.

## Method

### Sample

Data were collected from a total of 236 undergraduate students, including 42 who completed the baseline survey only, 25 who completed the follow-up survey, and 169 who completed both surveys. Because the focus of the study

was on assessing change in career preparedness over time, only the students who completed both surveys were used in these analyzes.<sup>1</sup> The sample was demographically diverse and consisted of students with a variety of professional goals ranging from working in the criminal justice system to attending law school (Table 1).

Two study groups were formed (i.e. comparison and internship). Students ( $n = 75$ ) in the comparison group were sampled from two criminal justice courses (statistics and forensic psychology) taught by the first author of the study. The internship group ( $n = 94$ ) was comprised of students who took the criminal justice internship program.

Independent samples  $t$ -test indicated that the internship group was significantly older [ $t(166) = -3.17, p < .05$ ], had higher class standing [ $\chi^2(3, N = 169) = 11.74, p < .05$ ], had more criminal justice majors [ $\chi^2(1, N = 169) = 9.41, p < .05$ ], and had fewer semesters remaining before graduation [ $t(167) = 7.11, p < .05$ ]. These differences are attributable to the selection criteria for participating in the criminal justice internship program, namely upper division students who are criminal justice majors or minors.

## Internship Program

The criminal justice internship program was established in 2001 and revised in 2004. Currently, it is offered during the fall, spring and summer semesters. It includes both a classroom and field-based component for which students may earn 12 hours of credit. The classroom component consists of traditional instruction on topics such as interviewing, resume construction, and workplace ethics. Students completed weekly journal assignments and a final report based on their experience in the internships. Placements vary depending upon student's preference, placement availability, and placement need. The internship coordinator arranged interviews between students and potential placements. Upon approval of the site supervisor and internship coordinator, students were formally assigned an internship placement. Students have held placements in law enforcement organizations (police departments, county prosecutor's office, Temple University police department), courts (municipal court, juvenile court, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office), private attorney offices, adult and juvenile probation and parole departments, federal agencies (including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, US Marshals Service, Federal Bureau of Investigations, US Postal Inspection Service, US Customs), victim services organizations, corrections (county, state, and federal level), juvenile programs, mental health programs, and programs in social services and private drug treatment.

<sup>1</sup> As described later, a factor analysis of the items related to reasons for taking the internship used all participants in the internship group ( $n = 94$ ).

**Table 1** Characteristics of study participants

| Characteristic   | Comparison<br>( <i>n</i> = 75) | Internship<br>( <i>n</i> = 93) | Total<br>( <i>N</i> = 169) |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| % Female   | 60.0                           | 62.4                           | 61.3                       |
| Ethnicity  |                                |                                |                            |
| % African American   | 17.3                           | 22.3                           | 20.1                       |
| % White/Caucasian  | 66.7                           | 60.6                           | 63.3                       |
| % Hispanic   | 10.7                           | 7.4                            | 8.9                        |
| % Other  | 5.3                            | 9.6                            | 7.7                        |
| Mean age*  | 21.0 (1.94)                    | 22.4 (3.27)                    | 21.8 (2.84)                |
| College class*   |                                |                                |                            |
| % Freshman   | 0                              | 1.1                            | 0.6                        |
| % Sophomore  | 14.7                           | 5.3                            | 9.5                        |
| % Junior   | 38.7                           | 23.4                           | 30.2                       |
| % Senior   | 46.4                           | 70.2                           | 59.8                       |
| % Criminal justice major*  | 77.3                           | 93.6                           | 86.4                       |
| Average num. of semesters remaining*                             | 3.2 (1.47)                     | 1.8 (1.1)                      | 2.4 (1.46)                 |
| Plans after graduating   |                                |                                |                            |
| % Career in criminal justice                                     | 33.3                           | 35.9                           | 34.7                       |
| % Graduate school  | 18.7                           | 5.4                            | 11.4                       |
| % Law school   | 18.7                           | 19.6                           | 19.2                       |
| % Work for a while then<br>go to graduate or professional school | 16.0                           | 27.2                           | 22.2                       |
| % Unsure   | 6.7                            | 6.5                            | 6.6                        |
| % Other  | 6.7                            | 5.4                            | 6.0                        |

*Note.* Standard deviations appear in parentheses.

\*Indicates statistically significant results of Independent Sample *t*-tests at  $p < .05$ .

## Procedure and Instruments<sup>2</sup>

Students in each condition completed a baseline and a posttest survey designed to measure constructs related to career preparedness, including common difficulties faced by those who are deciding on which career to pursue, career decision-making self-efficacy, and Career Locus of Control (CLOC). The baseline measure was collected within one week of the beginning of each semester, and the posttest measure was collected in the week preceding final exams.

This survey included items for eliciting a variety of demographic information (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, and major). For the internship group, the survey also included a set of 15 statements on which students indicated the level of importance (1 = "not at all important"; 7 = "very important") each was in their

<sup>2</sup> The Temple University Institutional Review Board approved this study as an exempt protocol because it collected information related to an accepted educational practice.

decision to participate in the internship program.<sup>3</sup> Examples of these statements include “I believe the internship will look good on my resume,” “I hope to learn career-relevant skills,” “I want an ‘easy’ A,” and “I needed it to fill 12 credit hours in my schedule” (Appendix A).

Three validated measures used to assess career preparedness were included in the survey, the Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire-revised (CDDQr; Gati & Osiprow, 2000, 2002), the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDESES-SF; Betz, Hammond, & Multon, 2005; Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996), and the CLOC (Millar & Shevlin, 2007).

### *Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire-revised*

Developed by Gati and Osipow (2000, 2002), the CDDQr was developed as a measure of three general domains related to career indecisiveness (lack of readiness, lack of information about, and difficulties related to inconsistent information). Each of these general areas includes several subscales. For example, the lack of readiness domain includes subscales for motivation, general indecisiveness, and dysfunctional beliefs. Prior analyzes of the scales show that they are internally consistent and have concurrent and discriminant validity (Lancaster, Rudolph, Perkins, & Patten, 1999).

For the *lack of readiness* domain, subscales for *lack of motivation*, *general indecisiveness*, and *dysfunctional beliefs* were constructed using instructions provided by Gati and Osiprow (2000, 2002). A total score for readiness also was created by averaging the three scores on the three subscales. To improve internal consistency reliability, the item “I expect that through the career I choose I will fulfill all my aspirations” was omitted from the dysfunctional beliefs subscale, and the item “I am usually afraid of failure” was omitted from the general indecisiveness subscale. As shown in Table 2, internal consistency reliability for the *lack of readiness* scale and subscales was acceptable, ranging from .65 to .69.

There were four subscales for the *lack of information* domain, including lack of information about (a) the *stages of the career decision-making process*, (b) *self*, (c) *occupations*, and (d) *ways of obtaining additional information*. The lack of information score was created by averaging the values of the four subscales. As shown in Table 2, internal consistency reliability was high, ranging from .75 to .90. In terms of difficulties in making career decisions related to *inconsistent information*, three subscales (*unreliable information*, *internal conflict*, and *external conflict*) were scored with alphas ranging from .79 to .81. In addition to this, a variable was created to reflect the total score on the CDDQr by averaging the 11 subscales described above (coefficient  $\alpha = .89$ ).

<sup>3</sup> A score of 4 represented the neutral response on this Likert scale.

**Table 2** Descriptive statistics of students' reasons for doing the criminal justice internship program ( $N = 108$ )

| Item   | Median | Mode | % Important <sup>b</sup> |
|--|--------|------|--------------------------|
| Mark how important each of these reasons was in your decision ... <sup>a</sup>                           |        |      |                          |
| I want to apply what I have learned in my criminal justice courses                                       | 7      | 7    | 83.3                     |
| I want to get an "easy" A <sup>d</sup>   | 4      | 4    | 30.6                     |
| I believe the internship will look good on my resume <sup>c</sup>  | 7      | 7    | 95.3                     |
| I need it to fill 12 credit hours in my schedule   | 4      | 1    | 41.1                     |
| I think it will be a good way to grow as a person  | 6      | 7    | 95.4                     |
| I think it will help me get ready for a career in criminal justice                                       | 7      | 7    | 97.2                     |
| I think it will help me to decide what I want to do for my career <sup>c</sup>                           | 7      | 7    | 89.9                     |
| I had nothing else better to do <sup>d</sup>   | 1      | 1    | 2.8                      |
| I have never had a job before  | 1      | 1    | 4.6                      |
| I think the classes taught by the professors in the CJ department do not teach me about the "real" world | 3      | 1    | 25.0                     |
| I hope to learn career relevant skills <sup>c</sup>  | 7      | 7    | 97.2                     |
| I need a chance to "ease" into a new career <sup>c</sup>   | 5      | 5    | 50.9                     |
| I hope to meet people who can help me find a job <sup>c</sup>  | 6      | 6    | 82.4                     |
| I think what I have learned in CJ classes has prepared me well for an internship <sup>d</sup>            | 5      | 6    | 75.0                     |
| I think what I have learned in my CJ classes has prepared me well for the "real" world <sup>d</sup>      | 5      | 4    | 58.3                     |

<sup>a</sup>Ratings were made on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 represented "not at all important" and 7 "very important." The neutral response was 4.

<sup>b</sup>The percentage of respondents who indicated 5, 6, or 7 on the Likert scale.

<sup>c</sup>Loaded on a factor interpreted as "career-focused reasons for taking the internship" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .70$ ).

<sup>d</sup>Loaded on a factor interpreted as "perceived challenge reasons for taking the internship" (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .63$ ).

### *Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form*

Developed by Betz and Taylor and other colleagues (Betz et al., 2005, 1996), this questionnaire applies Bandura's social learning theory to career development. It includes five subscales, including (1) *self-appraisal*, (2) *occupational information*, (3) *goal selection*, (4) *planning*, and (5) *problems solving*. In addition to this, an overall score for self-efficacy is also calculated. These scales have been shown to have good psychometric properties (Betz & Taylor, 2006). For the current study, these scales were calculated using instructions in Betz and Taylor

(2006). As shown in Table 2, internal consistency reliability for these scales using the current sample was acceptable, ranging from .68 to .71.

### *Career Locus of Control Scale*

Originally developed to measure the locus of control related to choosing a career among secondary school students, this questionnaire includes four scales designed to determine the extent to which one perceives one's career choice is under one's control vs. under the control of factors external to oneself. Scales for (1) *externality*, (2) *luck*, (3) *helplessness*, and (4) *powerful others* were scored for the current study using instructions provided by Millar and Shevlin (2007). Internal consistency reliability was acceptable (see Table 2), ranging from .71 to .85.

## Results

### Reasons for Taking the Criminal Justice Internship

In general, data presented in Table 2 showed that students took the internship primarily for career-oriented reasons. For example, the median and modal response for items like "I believe the internship will look good on my resume," "I think it will help me get ready for a career in criminal justice," "I think it will help me to decide what I want to do for my career," and "I hope to learn career relevant skills" was "very important." At least 90% of the students rated these as important reasons for taking the internship program.<sup>4</sup>

Initial principal components analysis of these items yielded a 5-factor solution with eigenvalues of 1 or greater, but to limit the number of factors with 2 or fewer items, items were forced into a 4-factor solution. Analysis of internal consistency reliability of these factors showed that only two had acceptable values for Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. As shown in Table 2, the first factor, interpreted as career-focused reasons ( $\alpha = .70$ ), was comprised of six items like "I believe the internship will look good on my resume," "I hope to learn career relevant skills," and "I hope to meet people who can help me find a job."

The second factor ( $\alpha = .63$ ), interpreted as perceived ease, was made of six items that appeared to represent the extent to which one perceived the internship would be difficult to complete. Example items are "I think what I have learned in CJ classes has prepared me well for an internship," "I think what I have learned in my CJ classes has prepared me well for the 'real'

<sup>4</sup> Scores of 5, 6, and 7 were considered "important" because they exceeded the neutral category on the scale.

world,” “I want to get an ‘easy’ A,” and “I need it to fill 12 credit hours in my schedule.” Students, on average, scored 5.92 (SD = .78) and 3.89 (SD = .97) on these composites, respectively.

A K-Means cluster analysis divided students into two groups based on their average scores on these two composites, and findings showed one group ( $n = 57$ ) reported both career-relevance and perceived ease of the course were important reasons (group centroids were 6.24 and 4.62, respectively) for taking the internship. The second group ( $n = 52$ ) also was characterized as having high scores on career relevance but placed a lower emphasis on perceived ease of the course (centroids were 5.57 and 3.09, respectively).

### Changes in Career Preparedness

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance with time (baseline vs. posttest) as the within subjects factor and study group (internship vs. comparison group) as the between subjects factor showed few significant interactions (Table 3). In fact, the only statistically significant interaction was observed on the *external conflicts* scale from the CCDQR and the *goal selection* scale of the CDSES-SF. Examination of the first interaction term revealed that although both groups reported increased difficulty in making a decision about a career related to *external conflicts*, the internship group reported a statistically smaller increase [ $F(1, 155) = 6.45, p < .05$ ].

Interpretation of the interaction term for *goal selection* showed that the members of the comparison group decreased in their confidence for setting educational and career goals for themselves, while those in the internship group increased in their confidence [ $F(1, 166) = 5.09, p < .05$ ]. The effect sizes associated with these interactions, however, were small (partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ ). Although not statistically significant, several marginally significant interactions also were observed. For example, while scores related to difficulty in making a decision about a career because one lacked information about the career decision-making process increased among the comparison group, they decreased for the internship group [ $F(1, 155) = 3.13, p = .079, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$ ]. The comparison group reported some decrease in difficulty related to lacking information about one’s self, but the score for the internship group decreased more on this scale [ $F(1, 155) = 3.26, p = .073, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$ ]. Similarly, the overall score on the CDSE-SF increased for the comparison group, and increased more for the internship group [ $F(1, 155) = 3.31, p = .071, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$ ].

A number of main effects for time also were examined in the current study. As shown in Table 3, a statistically significant change was observed in each of the four CLOC. Interestingly, each of these changes was in the opposite direction expected. For example, over time, both groups decreased in their scores on *internality*, indicating that students’ locus of control became more external over time [ $F(1, 166) = 4.27, p = .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$ ]. That is, by the end of the semester students’ perceptions that they were not in control of their

**Table 3** Mean scores on career assessments by study group

| Scale  | Alpha | Comparison (n = 75) |             | Internship (n = 94) |             | Effect   |
|--|-------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|
|  |       | Baseline            | Posttest    | Baseline            | Posttest    |          |
|  |       |                     |             |                     |             |          |
| <b>Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire revised (CDDQr)</b> |       |                     |             |                     |             |          |
| Readiness  | .65   | 3.10 (1.18)         | 3.45 (1.38) | 2.93 (1.08)         | 2.99 (1.14) | A        |
| Lack of motivation   | .68   | 2.45 (1.44)         | 2.84 (1.51) | 2.17 (1.42)         | 2.20 (1.37) | —        |
| General indecisiveness   | .69   | 3.74 (2.03)         | 4.04 (2.06) | 3.76 (2.09)         | 3.79 (2.01) | —        |
| Dysfunctional beliefs  | .67   | 3.11 (1.68)         | 3.47 (1.69) | 2.98 (1.68)         | 2.98 (1.65) | —        |
| Lack of information about ...  | .89   | 3.29 (1.65)         | 3.43 (1.68) | 3.05 (1.65)         | 2.97 (1.64) | —        |
| Stages of career decision-making   | .90   | 3.44 (1.97)         | 3.61 (1.74) | 3.52 (1.99)         | 3.20 (1.84) | —        |
| Self   | .85   | 3.03 (1.77)         | 3.29 (1.75) | 2.96 (1.72)         | 2.76 (1.65) | —        |
| Occupations  | .88   | 3.83 (2.18)         | 3.73 (1.95) | 3.28 (1.91)         | 3.30 (1.99) | —        |
| Ways of obtaining additional information                                 | .75   | 2.85 (1.73)         | 3.09 (1.80) | 2.50 (1.71)         | 2.50 (1.70) | A        |
| Difficulties related to inconsistent information                         | .81   | 2.74 (1.40)         | 2.76 (1.75) | 2.52 (1.51)         | 2.56 (1.54) | A        |
| Unreliable information   | .80   | 2.97 (1.80)         | 3.17 (1.81) | 2.72 (1.77)         | 2.61 (1.75) | A        |
| Internal conflicts   | .81   | 3.15 (1.68)         | 3.30 (1.70) | 2.77 (1.68)         | 2.85 (1.67) | —        |
| External conflicts   | .79   | 2.11 (1.46)         | 2.79 (1.75) | 2.18 (1.86)         | 2.26 (1.63) | A, A × B |
| Overall score on CDDQr   |       | 3.07 (1.27)         | 3.33 (1.45) | 2.86 (1.24)         | 3.07 (1.38) |          |
| <b>Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSE-SF)</b>                     |       |                     |             |                     |             |          |
| Self-Appraisal   | .71   | 3.98 (.57)          | 3.95 (.48)  | 3.95 (.48)          | 4.06 (.53)  | —        |
| Occupational information   | .68   | 3.94 (.63)          | 3.91 (.63)  | 3.91 (.65)          | 4.02 (.59)  | —        |
| Goal selection   | .69   | 3.82 (.58)          | 3.79 (.62)  | 3.78 (.60)          | 3.96 (.64)  | A × B    |
| Planning   | .70   | 3.86 (.66)          | 3.93 (.56)  | 4.01 (.56)          | 4.15 (.60)  | A        |
| Problem solving  | .68   | 3.82 (.64)          | 3.84 (.54)  | 3.95 (.63)          | 3.99 (.57)  | —        |
| Overall score on CDSE-SF   |       | 3.88 (.52)          | 3.88 (.46)  | 3.92 (.50)          | 4.04 (.50)  | —        |
| <b>Career Locus of Control Scale</b>                                     |       |                     |             |                     |             |          |
| Internality  | .77   | 5.26 (.71)          | 5.10 (.74)  | 5.26 (.84)          | 5.14 (.87)  | A        |
| Luck   | .85   | 1.87 (.87)          | 2.15 (.85)  | 1.89 (.95)          | 2.18 (1.05) | A        |
| Helplessness   | .78   | 1.50 (.65)          | 1.78 (.83)  | 1.49 (.68)          | 1.77 (.92)  | A        |
| Powerful Others  | .71   | 1.77 (.70)          | 1.94 (.80)  | 1.76 (.70)          | 1.98 (.90)  | A        |

Note. A = Group, B = Time, A × B = Group by time interaction.

career selection increased. Reflecting this, average scores on the *luck* and the *powerful others* scales increased, showing students' perceptions changed to place more importance on the role these play in choosing a career and finding a job. Students also reported greater difficulty in making a decision about a career due to inconsistent information [ $F(1, 166) = 4.31, p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ ]. Paradoxically, students' self-efficacy related to planning a career increased [ $F(1, 166) = 6.98, p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ ].

## Discussion

The current study represents the first systematic evaluation of the Temple University Department of Criminal Justice Internship Program since its inception. A rigorous quasi-experimental design was used to compare students enrolled in criminal justice classes with students enrolled in the internship. A survey that included questions related to why students chose to do the internship as well as a set of validated career assessments was collected both at the beginning and the end of the semester. It was expected that the study would provide insight into the reasons why students chose to take the internship as well as its impact on variables related to career preparedness. Overall, findings showed that students took the internship for career oriented reasons and there were statistically significant (but small) effects of the internship on improvements in student's self-efficacy related to goal selection and reduced perceptions of external conflicts contributing to difficulties in career-related decision-making. Other marginal effects also favored the internship group, but were not statistically significant.

The typical criminal justice intern clearly indicated that a number of career related factors were important to the decision-making process that led up to their taking the internship. Students believed an internship would look good on their resume, help them acquire job-relevant skills; help them clarify what career they wanted, and enable them to network with individuals who could help them find a job. To a lesser extent, other reasons related to the perceived ease of the course factored into the decision to become an intern, including about 31% who felt it would be an "easy" A and 41% who indicated it was a way for them to "fill" 12 h of course credit for their course schedule for that semester.

The finding that internship participation increased some aspects of career preparedness (e.g. goal selection self-efficacy) is important but somewhat tempered by the small effect sizes associated with these comparisons. This is further underscored by the findings that there were few interactions that favored the internship group over the comparison group in terms of changes related to improved career preparedness. Furthermore, locus of control became more external, rather than internal across the course of the study. Students realizing how difficult and demanding criminal justice jobs can be may explain these findings.

These findings may suggest that the internship program may need to be revised to increase its impact on the students. This possibly could involve organizing it around a theoretical model of career development from the educational psychology literature. One possibility is expressed in Bandura's social learning model (which also was the theoretical foundation of the CDSES-SF used in the current study). Revisions could focus on specific skills acquisition (e.g. developing a professional portfolio) that might help students to gain greater confidence, self-insight, and perceptions of control in their career decision-making process.

On the other hand, overall, scores on career related self-efficacy were high, and scores on career decision difficulties and locus of control were low. A ceiling effect, therefore, was apparent, and changes; particularly in locus of control and decision-making difficulties, may represent a regression to the mean rather than real change. Furthermore, restrictions in range related to self-efficacy scores left little room for students to improve in this domain. Unfortunately, these statistical artifacts cannot be ruled out as possible explanations for the findings (and lack of findings) evident in the current story.

The significant difference between study groups on age also represents a possible maturation threat to the internal validity of the current study. It may be that the fact that the internship students tended to be older (largely related to the criteria of being a junior or senior to be in the program) could have resulted in the differences observed in this study rather than the internship. That is, older students, because they have been in school longer and probably have more experience in the workplace, may simply have better insight into themselves and the career decision-making process as well as higher levels of self-efficacy related to these.

Given that the average difference in ages were quite small (about 1.4 years) and that the study examined a short period of time (one semester), the possibility that maturation as a confounding variable is limited. However, because the internship students were closer to graduation than the comparison group students, maturation cannot be entirely ruled out as a potential "third" variable. Because career preparedness is simply more easily studied than the extent to which the internship helped the students learn how to think, this study did not address the extent to which liberal arts competencies were specifically addressed and whether they improved as a result of participation in the internship. It is interesting that a majority of students felt that their classroom experiences had prepared them well for the internship and for the real world. However, this must be contrasted with the 25% of respondents that felt class work had prepared them poorly for the real world.

Additionally, it is important to note that the data for this study were collected post 2008 economic crash, as such students in the sample may have been experiencing a "historic" effect that influenced anxiety levels related to graduating from college and entering a potentially unstable employment market. Future work should seek to add a qualitative component to explore these issues.

In conclusion, the current study represented the first ever evaluation of the Temple University Department of Criminal Justice internship program. Findings suggest that the internship has a measureable (but perhaps small) impact on the career preparedness of those who participated. Future work should focus on enhancing the program to increase its impact, and on directly assessing the extent to which liberal arts competencies are enhanced by the internship experience.

### Notes on Contributors

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## Appendix A. Criminal Justice Internship Questionnaire<sup>5</sup>

Currently, we are in the process of studying the Criminal Justice Internship program at Temple University. Your answers on this questionnaire will help us to learn more about the Criminal Justice Internship program at Temple University. Please complete the following questionnaire to help us to understand more about who participates in our program so that we can improve it.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_
3. Current Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Gender (please circle):  
1 = Male 2 = Female
5. Race/Ethnicity (please circle all that apply):  
1 = African American  
2 = White/Caucasian  
3 = Hispanic  
4 = Asian  
5 = Native American  
6 = Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
6. College classification level (please circle):  
1 = Freshman  
2 = Sophomore  
3 = Junior  
4 = Senior
7. Are you a criminal justice major?  
1 = No\* 2 = Yes  
\*If "no", what is your major?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How many semesters until you graduate with your bachelor's degree  
\_\_\_\_\_?
9. After you graduate with your bachelor's degree, do you plan to  
to \_\_\_\_\_?  
1 = Start a career in criminal justice

<sup>5</sup> Please note that only the survey materials created by the authors are replicated here. Copies of the CDDQr, CDSSES, and CLCO are available via citations for those instruments.

| Important   | Not at all<br>Important | Very        |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| (1) I want to apply what I have learned in my criminal justice courses  | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (2) I want to get an "easy" A   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (3) I believe the internship will look good on my resume  | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (4) I need it to fill 12 credit hours in my schedule  | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (5) I think it will be a good way to grow as a person   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (6) I think it will help to get ready for a career in criminal justice  | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (7) I think it will help me to decide what I want to do for my career   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (8) I had nothing else better to do   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (9) I have never had a job before   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (10) I think the classes taught by the professors in the criminal justice department do not teach me about the "real" world | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (11) I hope to learn career-relevant skills   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (12) I need a chance to "ease" into a new career  | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (13) I hope to meet people who can help me find a job   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (14) I think what I have learned in my criminal justice classes has prepared me well for an internship                      | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| (15) I think what I have learned in my criminal justice classes has prepared me well for the "real" world                   | 1                       | 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

- 2 = Start a career in another professional field
- 3 = Go to graduate school
- 4 = Go to law school
- 5 = Work for a while in a career in criminal justice and then go to graduate school
- 6 = Work for a while in a career in another professional field and then go to graduate school
- 7 = Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- 8 = Unsure

**SECTION A: MY REASONS FOR BEING IN THE TEMPLE CJ INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

Instructions: Criminal justice majors choose to participate in the criminal justice internship program for a variety of different reasons. Please read each

of the statements on this page and mark how important each of these reasons was in your decision to participate in the Criminal Justice Internship Program this semester. Thank you for helping us with this.

SECTION C. PRIOR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

1. Have you ever participated in any kind of internship program before? *(If you currently are a intern through the criminal justice department, don't include this internship)*

1 = No 2 = Yes\*

a. If "yes", how many internships have you done before? \_\_\_\_\_

b. How long ago was the last internship you completed? \_\_\_\_\_ *(if still in one, indicate you are currently in an internship program)*

c. Please briefly describe your last internship?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_