

# MASTER OF URBAN INNOVATION

A photograph of a modern, multi-story building with a prominent glass facade and a section with vertical wooden panels. The building is set against a sky with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, there is a paved area, a small green tree, and a grassy lawn. The overall scene is bright and clear.

CLASS OF 2023  
STUDENT INTERNSHIP REPORT



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# INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

The Master of Urban Innovation Program includes a 4-month work placement, in which students contribute their knowledge, skills and experience in an actual workplace. Through their internship, students are able to provide organizations with fresh perspectives, innovative ideas and enthusiasm to learn.

The Master of Urban Innovation Program Office would like to thank all employer and industry partners who worked with us to create these meaningful co-op opportunities. These experiential opportunities have clearly provided an important learning experience for our students which will help them as they launch their careers in industry.

## INSTITUTE FOR MANAGEMENT & INNOVATION

The Institute for Management & Innovation (IMI) is a collaborative institute that offers cross-disciplinary and leading business education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Toronto Mississauga.

IMI aims to produce mission-focused leaders through academia and by fostering close interactions and sharing of expertise between faculty, staff and students within its programs.

## UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The University of Toronto is Canada's leading institution of learning, discovery, and knowledge creation, and is one of the world's top research-intensive universities. Students have the opportunity to learn from and work with preeminent thought leaders through its multidisciplinary network of teaching and research faculty, alumni, and partners.





# CARA BÜSSENSCHÜTT

## JOB TITLE

- Social Value and Impact Intern

## ORGANIZATION

- SiMPACT Strategy Group

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Researched well-being factors for a social value bank. A social value bank could be used to calculate social return on investment (SROI) in a more standardized way. Several frameworks for measuring wellbeing already exist.
- Started working on a SROI project for the City of Medicine Hat in Alberta. The city wants to use SROI and social value in their decision-making about recreational facilities.
- SVC, together with 5 other partners, won an RFP to create a National Technical Specification for Impact Statements. This work is done for the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). I was involved in project management and coordinating with the different partners on this project.
- Worked through several steps of the SROI process for NORS (National Overdose Response Service). Researched statistics on Canada's opioid crisis and learned about harm reduction approaches.
- Interviewed several networks of the global social value movement to write an article about projects in other countries and to foster communication between the networks.
- In a team, developed a marketing plan for SVC and was in charge of social media activities including a bi-weekly newsletter.

## WHAT I LEARNED

During my internship at SiMPACT and SVC I learned a lot about social sustainability, social value, and impact reporting. I also realized that there is already many organizations working in this field and it is a very collaborative field. There is not much competitive pressure between the different social value organizations because everyone works towards a similar goal which is greater social sustainability. I learned to work with different external partners and with the two interns. I also learned to create my own structure for the workday and to be a self-starter.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

If you are interested in social sustainability this is a great internship. It was a good practice for me to establish a communication schedule with my boss within the first month. Since she was very busy, we set up two 15-minute meetings a week to discuss projects, progress, and feedback required. This was great and necessary for me to move along in my projects. I recommend you establish some sort of communication strategy with your manager in the first few weeks of your internship.

This is also a great internship if you want to take ownership and responsibility for your projects. You have significant freedom to work on what you like and move projects along. If there is something that interests you, ask to work on this project or help out in any way possible.



# DALTON YOUNG

## JOB TITLE

- Junior Policy Analyst

## ORGANIZATION

- Climate Lens Team at the Government of Canada

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Supported the Climate Lens team in reviewing projects seeking funding based on their potential to mitigate or reduce GHG emissions
- Assisted with reviewing Climate Lens assessments and project submissions
- Collected, gathered, and summarized relevant research to provide support when assessing project submissions
- Performed environmental scans as required on a variety of subjects such as GHG quantification methods or standardized climate projects and scenarios.
- Aided in formatting information and guidance documents for recipients to use when navigating the Climate Lens process
- Organized and aided the procurement of contracts for work that was outside the scope of our team or the federal government

## WHAT I LEARNED

Firstly, I gained an inside look into a variety of government review processes and even had the chance to operate within them. I now better understand how the different teams and sections of government can work together to form a process capable of assessing projects and proposals to determine if they align with the goals of the governing body. Secondly, in-depth review and assessment of GHG emissions calculations has shown me the importance of consistent methodology in not only how we design our GHG mitigation measures but also in how we estimate them. Finally, I learned the importance of providing financial opportunities for GHG mitigation improvements to provinces, cities, and companies. For many of the projects that I had the opportunity to review, the changes required to produce significant impact on emissions were only possible through granted funding. This also showed me the importance of coordination across sectors and levels of government to ensure that the resources required to make the needed changes to address climate change are available.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

Don't be afraid to use your placement as an opportunity to experience a new field, area of study, or sector. It's always great to gain more experience in something you're already comfortable with, but I found this placement was a great way to experience new challenges and disciplines so that I could better define what my future career goals and aspirations are.

Also, don't stop reaching out for new experiences even once your placement begins. Something I was grateful for in my placement was the large number of opportunities I had to keep experiencing new fields through sitting in on cross-department meetings or providing temporary support for other teams and projects when I had a lighter workload.



# JANANEE SAVUNTHARANATHAN

## JOB TITLE

- Business Development Intern

## ORGANIZATION

- City of Hamilton

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Conducted comprehensive research and analysis and provide meaningful insights, perspectives, and ideas to research and marketing team
- Researched sectors and conduct scans on various industries
- Researched the City's economic structure, demographics, policies, and support for business to then include in digital assets for investment attraction
- Prepared business cases and reports outlining what the City has to offer and the value of partnership and investment
- Created content for websites and social media platforms using digital content creation tools

## WHAT I LEARNED

Through my placement, I was able to gain exposure and experience of economic development and its importance to building vibrant and sustainable cities. Through conducting comprehensive research and analysis, I was exposed to how data can be used to make decisions. For example, during my term I was tasked with providing monthly updates on the city's building permit activity to upper management, which helped identify investment progress in Hamilton. I also worked with the economic development team on investment attraction campaigns for developers, small businesses, and startups. In this role, I learned how to break down complex information into easy to read and relevant content.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

In the early stages of your internship, get to know your organization and identify what you are interested in learning more about and supporting the team on. As my internship had very broad responsibilities and not tied to a specific project, I had the opportunity to curate my internship to my interests. This helped me feel part of the team and gave me the opportunity to lead the marketing component of a project that fit right within my core interests.

Take initiative. As a student in the MUI program, you come across research that your organization may not have read yet but can be a valuable resource. I took the initiative to share what I was learning in my program and found research pieces that I knew would be relevant. I prepared briefing notes on the reports and shared it with my team, who found it very valuable.

Your internship is a learning opportunity. I made it a priority to learn something new every day and I would recommend to write down what you learn. This can be learning through research, learning through conversations with your team or what you learned about the city you work in.



# FANGYU (JUSTIN) HSU

## JOB TITLE

- Project Intern Company

## ORGANIZATION

- Ecolab Inc.

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Performed product and data analysis which ultimately got reported back to the team.
- Product Model Sketching and Drawing
- Participated in key client meetings, conducted client negotiation, and added value to overall product discussions
- Created and presented PowerPoint presentations for Marketing, Internal communication, and other purposes
- Created informational posters for Marketing, Internal communication, and other purposes

## WHAT I LEARNED

Overall, it was a great experience working at Ecolab Shanghai. Ecolab Inc. is a world leader in hydraulic engineering, water sanitation, and other water-related industry. I have learned numerous new techniques and skills throughout my internship that lasted for four months, and they can be categorized into two major aspects:

**Technical Skills:** my internship involved significant use of data (mainly on Excel), this included analyzing, organizing, and visualizing data into meaningful information for clients to understand. Hence, my data analysis skills have improved. This includes my accuracy and efficiency in dealing with data. I was also responsible for sketching and drawing 2D CAD models of our products; this skill I developed eventually throughout the internship.

**Communication Skills:** This was the first internship that required me to negotiate with potential clients; the entire process lasted for two weeks, giving me a good experience of client negotiation and discussion.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

Don't treat MUI assignments simply as "assignments" to complete; on many occasions during my internship, I was required to do a significant amount of quantitative and qualitative research and analysis. Most of the time, MUI professors allow students to choose topics under certain restrictions. Make sure you select a topic that you are interested in and is related to an industry that you want to work for in the future. This allows you to gain some industry knowledge and research skills and prepares you well for the internship.





# KRISTIAN SQAPI

## JOB TITLE

- Communications and Marketing Intern

## ORGANIZATION

- CivicAction

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Managed organizations social media including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn
- Created monthly performance reports and presented this to senior leadership
- Created presentations for different stakeholders using Power Point
- Reviewed and edited reports
- Conducted a market scan for new projects
- Created graphics for events

## WHAT I LEARNED

Working at CivicAction was a very eye-opening experience for me as I never worked in a professional office setting prior to this. I learned a lot about how I should conduct myself in situations and the inner workings of non-profit work. I learned and improved on a lot of skills that will aid me further along in my career like time management and storytelling, but I also learned a lot about myself and how I get the best out of myself, especially in a hybrid work model.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

My advice would be to really be proactive when it comes to looking for your summer placements. That means doing your research on who's hiring and actively be on LinkedIn look at potential people to have coffee chats with. Doing this is so much more beneficial than I ever thought it would be and I urge future students to do the same. After you secure your placement, my advice would be to make an effort to go around and meet the people you will be working with for the summer. Knowing people in the office and having that sense of being on a team will help you so much because it'll make you more passionate for the work you are doing and it'll make going to work everyday fun, rather than feeling like a chore.



# NATHAN YEUNG

## JOB TITLE

- Project Management Intern

## ORGANIZATION

- WoodGreen Community Services, Housing and Homelessness Services Unit (815 Danforth Avenue)

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Reported to and supervised by the Director of Housing Growth and Development of WoodGreen.
- Provided editorial support to a housing funding proposal, which was submitted to the City of Toronto, by proofreading and performing formatting works within a limited timeframe of 3 days.
- Prepared PowerPoint slide deck of a rapid housing proposal and presented it to WoodGreen's housing board that allowed them to advise on the next steps.
- Appointed as the contact person for a property that was recently taken over by WoodGreen and would be redeveloped into affordable housing.
- Coordinated with external contractors (i.e. planners, architects, and engineers) by allowing them access to the aforementioned property that is crucial for the redevelopment process.
- Created a project management tool (unified filing framework) that allows for better management and access to WoodGreen's existing and upcoming housing projects.
- Presented the aforementioned project management tool to WoodGreen's housing board to obtain feedback and thus further enhance the tool.

## WHAT I LEARNED

My experiences at WoodGreen were way more fruitful and eye-opening than what I expected before. The duties and tasks that I was given were so diverse, including drafting documents or PowerPoint slides, coordinating with real-life urban practitioners to work on a housing project, creating a project management tool from scratch, and performing in-person site inspections. In other words, this internship has given me many opportunities to explore the East York community and being able to engage with its residents. The most notable task would be creating a project management tool that allows for better access and management of WoodGreen's housing documents- the outcome of this project management was rewarding, and I was proud of it.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

I was lucky to land the internship at WoodGreen by having a coffee chat and an additional interview with the VP at WoodGreen. At first, I found it extremely intimidating to talk to people, that I had zero connections on LinkedIn, not to mention that around half of the people would not respond to your messages. You need to ensure that the messages that you sent off could express your personality and your interest in their company/field. Do not be afraid to ask for help from Natasha and the MUI faculty, they are always here to help.



# RACHEL BREGMAN

## JOB TITLE

- Junior Planner

## ORGANIZATION

- Glen Schnarr & Associates Inc.

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Meeting with Clients, Associates, and government officials
- Conducted sites visit
- Conducted research on Policy & Zoning Analysis / Research
- Created Project Proposals, project cover letters, and briefing memos all for external review
- Posted Minor Variance and Site Description Posts at site locations
- Conducted detailed financial analysis of Development & Planning Fees

## WHAT I LEARNED

I began to learn the process involved for a private development to get the necessary approval in order to commence their project - be it a commercial, residential or industrial use. Each client we work with will have a different requirement and its own unique aspects to the site. There is a long process involved in developing a site, and while I was not involved in all the steps or stages, I was involved in some of the initial and middle steps of a project, for example meeting a client and gaining insight into the goals of the project, policy and zoning research for permitted uses to see if the proposed development is even allowed, and if not then amendments and development applications have to be filled in order to find alternate solutions to develop the project. This is the initial steps, and while I did not personally have to contact exterior advisors, the associate planners who oversee entire projects are in contact with various departments such as, water and sewage management, landscape architect, arborists, engineers, cultural and heritage department, and much more. I was able to gain insight into the steps and phases involved in land use planning, project management, and private development.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

While I was not an expert in land use planning going into my position, Gabe's urban governance class and any policy class for that matter is very helpful to understand the role and meaning of policies. Once you are familiar with what a policy is you are able to be creative with its use and creating new policies. I did not know a land use consultation firm could create new policies which the government will follow and use as a standard, however we have clients who make developments which do not have policies for that specific use, and as land use planners we are able to write or recommend new policies which the city or town can then approve and use as the new standard.

Other than understanding the use and flexibility of policies, project management and high organizational skills are key for this position. It is a high paced job, with multiple tasks involved, and for multiple projects. Being organized and managing different projects within their own deadlines are crucial in order to be in this line of work.



# SHABA TASKIN

## JOB TITLE

- Program Development Consultant

## ORGANIZATION

- pointA

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Developed program to assess hybridity of work at workplaces all over Canada
- Completed research on current trend of remote work and hybrid-work best practices
- Completed research based on interviews of HR personnel, Managers, and employees from different workplaces
- Designed job role hybridity assessment service for Transport Demand Management organization
- Developed remote work assessment using Cognito forms
- Developed marketing and communications strategy for assessment service including key messaging, marketing and communications development strategy

## WHAT I LEARNED

Transit and transportation are not my main areas of research focus. However, I gained an extremely valuable experience working with a Transport Demand Management organization. This opportunity helped me gain knowledge in a field I was less experienced in. Moreover, working in an organization with a very small team, I had the unique experience of learning first-hand about work done by each member of the team in the entire organization. I gained skills in business development, customer acquisition, program development, and grant application. I gained expertise in a range of different software such as MiroBoard, Slack, Cognito forms, MS Excel, Word Press, which will be extremely helpful for me throughout my career, irrespective of which field I work in. Finally, I formed valuable industry connections and gained a close network of colleagues who are extremely helpful and supportive.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

My first advice for future students is to take the Professional Development component of this program very seriously. It is a unique support offered by the MUI program that can be extremely helpful in not only getting an internship, but also in gaining skills such as networking, resume, CV, cover letter building, presenting, interviewing, and so on. These are skills which will be required throughout our careers.

My second advice to future students will be – do not keep hanging on to the idea of a “perfect” internship. Every opportunity has something to offer, and even if you find yourself in a difficult position during the internship, you will learn a lot about yourself and how you handle tough situations professionally.

My third advice echoes my first advice – You are not alone in this. MUI, especially MUI’s Placement Manager (Natasha) is there to help you not only to get an internship, they are also there throughout the internship for your help. Keep your Placement Manager updated about any issues that may come up during work and let them know about issues sooner than later.



# TIAN YANG

## JOB TITLE

- Program Support Trainee

## ORGANIZATION

- City of Toronto

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Assisted with organizing and presenting data collected using various data visualization software (Power BI, Excel pivot table)
- Collected, analyzed and interpreted feedback for the purposes of recommending/developing business solutions
- Created survey questionnaires for all City staff with the goal of fostering and promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion programs.
- Prepared and presented reports to the Management team to keep them informed of the status of the projects, communicated upcoming changes and/or presented recommendations
- Identified data patterns & trends and provided insights to enhance business decision making capability in business planning, policy improvement, and solution assessment.
- Developed dashboards for regular monthly reporting of training satisfaction results, and built a data entry form within a spreadsheet which will save employees from having to manually enter thousands of entries per month

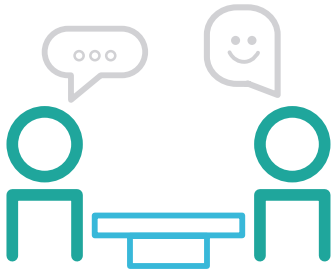
## WHAT I LEARNED

My internship with the City of Toronto has deepened my knowledge of Urban Innovation. Throughout my internship, I was working with the Toronto Employment & Social Services (TESS) division. Over the past few months, TESS has been trying to digitize their services, such as health, housing, childcare and other social services, to an online platform, which gives Torontonians easier access to their services. This idea is innovative because, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many people are afraid of going into public spaces; the online platform makes TESS services more accessible. I was fortunate to be part of the process. This internship also helped me to get more familiar with the latest data analytics software programs; I helped the division collect data results and presented them to various stakeholders.

## MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

My advice about being successful in finding a placement is to send out as many applications as possible (based on your interests); in this way you maximize your chances of getting a good internship opportunity. When you get an interview, be sure to prepare thoroughly. You need to review the job description very attentively and understand exactly what the employer wants and the qualifications required to perform the job. My suggestion about how to be successful on the job is to always keep a good relationship with your coworkers, supervisors and managers because not only do they influence your daily work, but also they can provide you with positive references for your future job applications.

# OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



Mock Interviews



Guest Speaker



Networking Events



Capstone Projects



Field Trip



Coffee Chats

# CONTACT



## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HIRING A STUDENT AND ENGAGING WITH THE MUI PROGRAM:

### **Natasha Walli**

Placement and Employer Relations Manager

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