

# MUI | Master of Urban Innovation



## CLASS OF 2024 INTERNSHIP REPORT

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Master of Urban Innovation (MUI) aims to educate and train the next generation of city builders and leaders. With a strong focus on urban economic development and governance, our program is uniquely designed to be interdisciplinary, integrating thought leadership and insights from urban studies, political science, geography, planning, public policy, management, and innovation systems.

Central to the MUI program is experiential learning, including providing our students with internship opportunities. Internships mark the start of our students' careers and professional journeys and provide students with real-world experience. To ensure our students are well prepared, we instill students with the knowledge, skills and training necessary to solve problems and contribute meaningfully in the workplace.

Our students are passionate about cities. They come from diverse backgrounds ranging from business and planning to urban studies and architecture. They have a strong desire to bring fresh, creative and innovative strategies, solutions and perspectives to pressing urban challenges.

We hope that you will enjoy learning more about the work our students undertook during their internships. And, we hope you will engage with the MUI program and our students!

Sincerely,



**Tara Vinodrai**  
Associate Professor and Director  
Master of Urban Innovation  
Institute for Management & Innovation



# INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

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

The Master of Urban Innovation program thanks all our employers and partners who worked with us to create meaningful opportunities for our students. These experiences provide an important foundation for our students as they launch their careers and work to make positive change in cities, industry, and communities.



# ABOUT US

## 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.



## INSTITUTE FOR MANAGEMENT & INNOVATION

The Institute for Management and Innovation inspires leaders to close the innovation gap through our six world-class master's programs and our research and innovation hubs.

Students thrive in our experiential learning environment, bolstered by powerful partnerships, our culture and values, and our connections within the University of Toronto ecosystem.

Studying at the Institute for Management and Innovation is unlike studying anywhere else. Our community is built on inclusivity and diversity of people, thought and experience. You'll be welcomed by a dedicated team of staff and faculty who are here to support your lifelong learning.

We inspire transformational thinking and collaboration, integrating people, place and purpose. Our students, faculty and researchers come together to build leaders and knowledge that harness innovation and apply it in ways that will create a positive impact for people and communities everywhere.

**We can help open the door to the world for you.**



# BAOQUAN (BERNIE) SHEN

## RESEARCH TRAINEE, CITY OF TORONTO, CITY PLANNING DIVISION

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Participated in a field survey to collect data for more than 3500 businesses and buildings in Toronto within the context of municipal planning and current planning issues.
- Effectively communicated with various community stakeholders to understand their core demands, clarify misunderstanding, and build trust.
- Collected, entered, and maintained data with details into the employment and land use GIS database and analyzed the post-COVID employment landscape in Toronto.
- Demonstrated strong teamwork to help promote the overall process of the project.
- Analyzed business and data patterns and provided insights to the Toronto Employment Survey (TES) Team in the City Planning Division.
- Assisted our team to identify and solve technical issues for the GIS database.

### WHAT I LEARNED

Communication was one of the most important skills for my internship. My job needed me to represent the City and communicate with various stakeholders, business owners, workers, and citizens. Communication is also an effective way to collect information, clarify misunderstandings, and establish trust. My internship also taught me how data collection and analysis influences planning. The data we collected is significant for the City Planning Division to better support local businesses in a sustainable way. Moreover, my internship deepened my understanding about how the city works and how different ideas, interest groups, and rules influence policy making, such as bike lanes, land use, and development planning. By talking to different groups and individuals, I could understand their core demands and how the City turn their demands into policies that benefit everyone.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

My advice for future students is to keep applying and never give up. I know the feeling of being rejected and worrying about the future is not easy. However, as long as you keep applying, you will find something for you and learn valuable things from that experience. My second advice is to do your best to prepare for each document and interview. Make sure you do your research, understand what they're looking for, and demonstrate all relevant experiences and skills to show you are the best person for the position. Natasha and Alyssa provide extraordinary support to help you. Make sure you leverage all resources.



# DAVID SCHOENHOLZ

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDENT INTERN, CITY OF HAMILTON

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Conducted monthly internal and external facing data and explanatory updates.
- Researched and reviewed municipal, provincial, and federal levels of policy.
- Conducted marketing outreach and external communications campaigns and projects.
- Contributed to projects involving communication with external stakeholders and senior management.
- Initiated potential data reports on economic indicators and presented research and reports to upper management.
- Utilized software (Clickup) to track daily/weekly/monthly tasks and their due dates/importance.

### WHAT I LEARNED

While working at the City of Hamilton for the 2023 summer I learned a plethora of new things including different marketing strategies, how to best represent and display data based on your target audience, digging into and reviewing policy frameworks that other municipalities across the United States and Canadian systems are using as their future vision. I also gained understanding about marketing methods and the breadth of reach that is wanted from a municipal organization. I learned that everything created needs to then be tailored towards a target audience and demographic. My manager emphasized that displaying data is an art form and should be treated as such.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

My advice for future students is to encourage them to be the person who asks questions. It is important to understand the context, scope and goals on the project that you are working on. Some more tips- show genuine interest and curiosity, and try and learn why the system is how it is before making any judgement. Additionally, if you are want to try a different function of work within the organization ask- you never know. Communication is extremely valuable and keeping your manager up to date with what you are working on as well as if you wish to switch topics is invaluable. I was able to work on a wide range of topics including assisting other projects when I had spare time and I really appreciated that variety of work.



# DEVAN BHARDWAJ

## RESEARCH TRAINEE, CITY OF TORONTO, CITY PLANNING DIVISION

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Helped the City Toronto understand its land use and economy by conducting field research.
- Collected employment and land use records to assist Toronto in planning its future and the services it offers.
- Worked independently and travel around Toronto to collect data.
- Visited places of employment to determine and record characteristics such as employee numbers, type of business, land use, employment activity, and development characteristics.
- Collected, entered, and maintained data in the employment and land use database using GIS software.
- Conducted callback's to retrieve data not collected in the field.
- Find NAICS and LUACS codes for businesses and land use activities.

### WHAT I LEARNED

During my internship with the City of Toronto, I learned the importance of data and how it can aid in the creation of policy in local government. I also expanded my knowledge of ArcGIS software through data collection and City of Toronto mapping software. In addition to these skills, I further learned how to operate in a government atmosphere, such as understanding the inner workings of government and the public sector environment, and how to work within government procedures while adhering to strict timeframes. Additionally, through surveying businesses, I witnessed firsthand how the public interacts with local government and what their expectations of local government are.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

I would recommend that students treat MUI professional development sessions as a foundation to build their professional skills and use them when in the workforce. During the internship, take the time to get to know your coworkers and participate in out-of-office team-building events. Also, seek advice from supervisors on how to improve your work and receive career advice. Additionally, if you do not find your perfect internship, that is okay. Every placement is a learning experience where you will discover what you like and don't like. The internship is also what you make of it. If you make the best of the situation, the placement will be more enjoyable.



# KARL ZHANG

## CREATIVE LEAD, VELES CONSTRUCTION LTD.

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Led in overall company rebranding and communication tasks:
  - Restructured & revamped the company's website with content & graphic creation.
  - Animated the company's social media accounts, advertisement, and weekly blog postings.
- Engaged, onboarded and followed-up with clients for various projects to maintain customer loyalty and increase customer base.
- Managed membership, sponsorship plans and event opportunities with Canadian & Ontario building & construction associations.
- Conducted research in sustainability construction practices and reporting: consulted different levels of governments, various institutional clients to understand sustainable housing & construction policies, goals, current projects, and programs.
- Researched government and industry grants that are available for sustainability projects and propose sustainability marketing and business expansion ideas

### WHAT I LEARNED

**Sustainable Building Practices & Policies:** Throughout my sustainable construction research, I consulted public policies to seek various past and ongoing sustainable schemes and grants to retrofit people's homes and researched different types of green certifications. I also reached out to many institutions to seek professional advice, funding, business opportunities. These exercises helped me learn more about greener & more innovative ways of buildings construction, governmental green initiatives, programs, and incentives.

**Technical skills:** I have learnt many new engineering, and architectural technical terms and general renovation/construction service scope from demolition, carpentry, paintings to different building technologies like prefabricated materials. **PR & media skills:** I have developed a better understanding on the existing media landscape, networks, platforms, and marketing practices in Canada/Toronto. I also acquired more video shooting & production skills from my colleagues. And I have furthered my website design & social media management and other conventional marketing practices. **Soft skills:** My communication, organizational and time management skills have enhanced over the internship period.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

I am a bit undecided about what kind of career path I want to pursue. If you don't really know what you want to do, just apply to everything. Even if you have a strong idea of your career goals, apply to everything. I did have an interest in interior design prior to my current internship. My plan was to explore opportunities within this sector and expanding my network. However, I remain open to diverse industries, considering that PR has a versatile application and can support any venture in need of effective communication. Also try to be more proactive next year to know more industry experts and seek advice from them. You never know what will bring to the table. And just go to all the events the school organized for you, it would be a good opportunity for you to socialize and meet interesting people.



# NAOMI CODO

## GRADUATE RESEARCH INTERN, KPMB ARCHITECTS

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Collaborated with KPMB Lab on projects focused on exploring alternative materials with low embodied carbon.
- Contributed to the findings of sustainable and environmentally conscious design solutions.
- Conducted a thorough jurisdictional scan and analysis for Sustainable Campus Design.
- Researched and identified relevant regulations and best practices to inform the firm's approach to sustainable projects.
- Assisted in the development and composition of a comprehensive report on potential commercial to residential conversions.
- Collaborated with the Marketing and Business Development department to explore new business opportunities and strategies.
- Participated in various lunch-and-learns throughout the internship in which we had the opportunity to learn about various relevant subjects including ongoing projects at the firm as well as current design practices.

### WHAT I LEARNED

During my internship at KPMB Architects, I gained valuable insights into the intersection of sustainability and architecture. I developed a keen understanding of the importance of regulatory compliance and best practices in Sustainable Campus Design, which equipped me with the knowledge needed to inform the firm's approach to sustainable projects. Moreover, my internship allowed me to broaden my skill set by assisting in the creation of a comprehensive report on commercial to residential conversions, exposing me to new business opportunities and strategies in the field of architecture. Overall, my time at KPMB Architects provided me with a holistic perspective on architecture and sustainability, emphasizing the importance of innovation, research, and collaboration in creating a more sustainable built environment.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

Take advantage of every chance you have, to learn and to contribute, as every project can teach you something. Be proactive in looking for varied experiences, from regulatory research to sustainable design, as this will broaden your skill set and outlook. Effective cross-departmental collaboration is necessary in this subject. Always be open-minded and inquiring when searching for creative answers. Maintaining a strong work ethic and a love for sustainability will not only enhance your internship but will also open the door to a successful and rewarding future in design.



# PAW ROE SHEE

## SUSTAINABILITY POLICY INTERN, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Conducted policy research and analysis, and develop policies and programs related to the adoption and deployment of emerging transportation technologies (e.g. automated vehicles, electric vehicles) in Ontario.
- Prepared briefing notes, presentations and other documents for management.
- Employed innovative approaches to policy development.
- Assisted and supported various projects, tests and studies to help advance ministry priorities.
- Created PowerPoint briefings for the team to better understand complex terms and reports.
- Participated in team meetings to share tasks progression/updates
- Reviewed different documents and sharing input for future approvals.

### WHAT I LEARNED

During my internship, I learned a lot about how our provincial government works and the roles that everyone plays in making Ontarians' lives better. There is a lot of work that goes into all of the policies that are in place, and everything is done with complete dedication. This internship also taught me how to be a good team member; the effective way the team communicates allows the job to be completed quickly and with few errors. There is a lot of work that needs to be done as we transition to more ecologically friendly modes of transportation, and the team works exceptionally hard to prepare the province.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

When you first start looking for an internship, you could get discouraged if you don't receive an interview or experience some sort of rejection. However, don't let that bring you down; instead, think back on it and draw lessons from it. It will be very helpful to have practice interviews with Natasha, and I would highly recommend it. As MUI students, we frequently have the opportunity to attend conferences or other events. On your internship, simply just be yourself and be kind to your coworkers, they are there to help and support you while still doing their everyday jobs. If you're apart of a big organization, don't be scared to reach out to people beyond just your office.



# TANZILA IRA

## RESEARCH ASSISTANT CO-OP, MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOB CREATION AND TRADE (MEDJCT), PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Conducted Jurisdictional Scans to support the Housing Supply Action Plan (HSAP) and supported the Strategic Development Unit (SDU) in Preparing briefing materials for Deputy Minister.
- Conducted Regional Economic Development research and prepared six Community Profiles for AMO 2023 Conference in a week.
- Liaised with inter-ministry partners, developed and maintained member list in order to support regional stakeholders for EDCO.
- Conducted literature review for Cabinet submission on Regional Innovation Centers (RICs) in Ontario.
- Updated regional CDMA and CMA Dashboards using PowerBi software.
- Drafted Information Notes, Briefing Notes and meeting minutes on a daily basis.
- Conducted and presented findings for independent research project on Community Improvement Plan (CIP) in Ontario.

### WHAT I LEARNED

In my role, I gained a wide range of valuable technical and soft skills and experiences. Firstly, I became proficient in various data analytics tools, particularly PowerBi, for updating regional dashboards, which improved my data analysis and visualization abilities in a data-driven environment. I also refined my research and analytical skills by conducting jurisdictional scans and research on topics such as regional economic development, community profiles, housing supply, and innovation centers, enhancing my research methods and information synthesis capabilities. Additionally, I strengthened my stakeholder engagement and relationship management skills by collaborating with inter-ministry partners and maintaining member lists to support regional stakeholders for EDCO. Strong written communication skills were crucial, as I regularly drafted information notes, briefing notes, and meeting minutes. Lastly, I enhanced my presentation skills by conducting independent research project and presenting the findings. In summary, my role provided me with a diverse skill set, including technical, research, communication, project management, stakeholder engagement, policy development, and presentation skills.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

Take advantage of chances to improve your technical, research, and communication abilities. Develop your skills in stakeholder involvement. Accept a variety of experiences; they will prepare you for a range of careers.



# XINGYU (ERIC) ZHAO

## MICRO-MOBILITY ASSISTANT, CITY OF MISSISSAUGA

### INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

- Spearheaded the creation of a pioneering monitoring and evaluation framework for Mississauga's sharing micro-mobility system. This framework encompassed 8 strategic goals, 30 objectives, a data collection list, and survey. It operated under the Province of Ontario's e-scooter pilot program, marking the first comprehensive model of its kind in the province.
- Drafted the service agreement for a future private micro-mobility operator to ensure equity and sustainability of the shared micro-mobility system.
- Facilitated collaboration with diverse city teams and municipalities across Ontario to collect vital information and perspectives.
- Drafted outreach emails to over 15 working teams of the project, organized and conducted more than 10 meetings with both internal and external stakeholders. Engaged in constructive discussions on cross-departmental objectives and solicited valuable feedback.
- Compiled meeting minutes for over 15 internal meetings, including councilor meetings and steering committee sessions.
- Contributed significantly to various initiatives within the Active Transportation team, actively supporting programs like the School Bike Circuit, Walk to School Traffic Count, and other projects aimed at enhancing community mobility.
- Delivered an end-of-internship presentation which connected micro-mobility and transportation equity, and emphasized the significance of transport poverty within the division.

### WHAT I LEARNED

Through this internship, I gained invaluable experience in spearheading the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for a large-scale municipal project. The project itself also provided me with opportunities to engage with various stakeholders, both internally and externally. It taught me the importance of efficient and effective communication. I was able to listen to their suggestions and comments, subsequently improving the deliverable accordingly. Furthermore, as the evaluation and monitoring framework focuses on the equity perspective of the project, I was able to apply the theories on transportation equity I had learned in school to the establishment of the framework, putting them into practice.

### MY ADVICE FOR FUTURE STUDENTS

My advice for future student interns is to never hesitate to ask questions. Remember, we're here to learn and grow. Everyone understands that we're in a learning phase, and people are genuinely willing to help. Asking questions not only demonstrates our eagerness to learn but also ensures that we're on the right track. It's a valuable way to gain insights, clarify doubts, and understand the nuances of the work environment. Additionally, seeking guidance from experienced colleagues can provide you with invaluable perspectives and help you navigate challenges more effectively. So, ask as many questions as you need!

# OTHER WAYS TO PARTNER WITH US



**Mock Interviews**



**Field Trip**



**Networking Events**



**Capstone Projects**



**Guest Speaker**



**Coffee Chats**

# CONTACT US



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