EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING DEFINITIONS

What is Experiential Learning?

Experiential Learning describes those experiences for which a student earns academic credit in an agreed-upon, short-term, supervised work experience related to a student's field of study. These experiences are termed as either *cooperative education* (co-op) or *internships.* These experiences can be full-time or part-time, on or off campus, and paid or unpaid. Credit is awarded to the student by the College upon successful completion of the experience and all academic requirements.

Experiential Learning does NOT address human services practicums, allied health clinicals, or other required fieldwork experiences leading to professional licensure or certification. Also the experiential education opportunities described herein are distinct from volunteer community service or classroom-based service learning opportunities.

Cooperative Education (Co-op):

Cooperative education provides students with multiple periods of work in which the work is related to the student's major or career goal. The typical program plan is for a student to alternate terms of full-time classroom study with terms of full-time, discipline-related employment. Since program participation involves multiple work terms, the typical participant will work three or four work terms, thus gaining a year or more of career-related work experience before graduation. Virtually all co-op positions are paid and the vast majority involves some form of academic credit. (NACE, 2011)

Internships

An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent. (NACE, 2011)