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Summer Youth Blog

Urban Scholars, University of Massachusetts Boston

Office of Information Technology, University of Massachusetts Boston

Office of Communications, University of Massachusetts Boston

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Summer Youth Blog

Urban Scholars, Office of Information Technology, Office of Communications

Summary/Abstract

In an effort to expose youth to careers in information technology and journalism, Urban Scholars, the Office of Information Technology, and the Office of Communications partnered this past summer to offer two high school graduates an internship focusing on the development of a summer youth blog. The two interns, Jennie Lai and Trammel Griffith, who currently attend UMass Boston and Mass College of Liberal Arts respectively, were mentored by UMass Boston staff Akunna Rosser, Colleen Locke, and Lisa Link. The interns were given the task of developing a blog that would publicize the many youth programs on UMass Boston's campus during the summer, including Camp Shriver, Project ALERTA, Project REACH, Talented and Gifted Program (TAG), and Urban Scholars. Jennie and Trammel's blog became the first blog promoting the services offered by each UMass Boston summer program. Overall, this unique partnership between Urban Scholars and the Office of Information Technology has not only offered meaningful job experiences and personal development opportunities to low-income/first-generation college-bound youth, but has also exemplified the university's commitment to community engagement and a culture of learning.

Goals and Objectives

- Create, edit, and monitor the visitor feedback and web traffic for a summer youth programs blog
- Cover the various programming and services offered by UMass Boston's summer programs, including Camp Shriver, Project ALERTA, Project REACH, Talented and Gifted Program (TAG), and Urban Scholars
- Publish one article and one photo essay each week Use the UMass Boston WordPress blog network to support the summer youth programs's public relations and communications efforts
- Serve as a model for staff and faculty on campus who wish to learn how to blog

Results/Impacts

Jennie Lai and Trammel Griffith came out of their internship with:

- Improved work readiness and job skills
- A more positive and defined outlook about their future career path
- Increased earned income and improved attitudes about their personal and families's outlook and their role in it
- Increased mobility beyond their neighborhood and greater comfort with a diverse group of people



"This blog makes excellent use of our system, and blows new users away with what's possible with blogs. 'That's a blog?! How can I get mine to look like that?' is an exclamation I often hear."

John Mazarella, Instructional Support Specialist

"I can tell you my reaction to the blog. I was amazed that students could put together such a high-quality blog in such little time."

Rose Coveney, Senior Graphic Designer

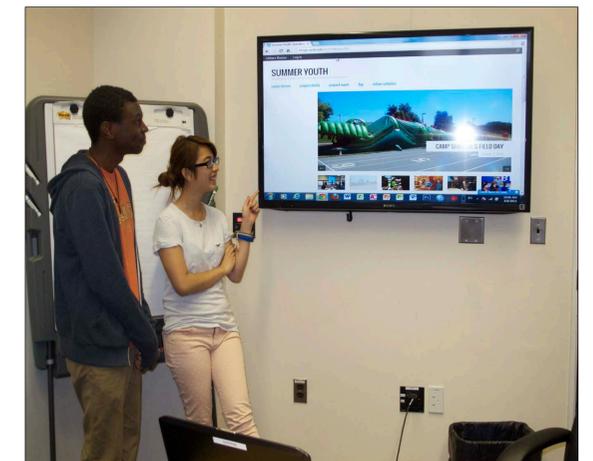
Approaches and Methods

- Project-based and experiential learning
- Weekly workshops at Boston University on professionalism, time and money management, and career development
- Job shadowing and direct field experience

From these experiences, Jennie and Trammel acquired basic skills in blog development, photography, writing and editing content, and interviewing.

Conclusion/Next Steps

This summer, Urban Scholars and the Office of Information Technology will continue using the Summer Youth Blog to promote UMass Boston's youth programs and address the critical need of summer jobs for city youth in Boston.



References and Resources

Summer Youth Blog:

<http://www.umb.edu/summeryouth>

John Hancock MLK Scholars Program:

<http://www.mlksummerscholars.com/>

Partnership Information

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