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## The Value and Impact of Internships

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The purpose of this research is to examine how students perceive the value and impact of completing an internship. This project is analyzing the data in context with the Criminal Justice department interns.

This presentation will share the work of a project to assess the perceived value and impact of Criminal Justice internships through a content analysis of student reflections about their experiences while enrolled in an internship course. The research is governed by an IRB research protocol working with faculty internship coordinators. The methodology will allow for reoccurring themes to become evident and shed light on what the interns found most beneficial with respect to their experiential learning experiences, as well as any changes to opinions or values over the course of the internship. More specifically, this research will focus on the academic effects and professional growth of the interning students. Some of the themes/values that will be noted and compared in the analysis are changes in confidence, the difference between hard and soft skills and which skills are being developed and honed, defining professionalism and how this differs at job sites, attitude changes from first impressions to the final weeks and how the experience will or has impacted the intern's professional aspirations and career plans. The analysis will help uncover the factors that determine the value and impact of internships for students. Findings will be discussed to suggest potential areas of improvement for internship programs at KSU and beyond.

#### Keywords

- Internships
- Values
- Research
- Academic effects
- Professional achievements
- Confidence
- Hard skills
- Soft skills
- Professionalism