

Testimonial

“By bringing on three young Interns to our Board (and having another three intern with us the year after), our strategic discussions have been challenged and enriched with new perspectives. We’ve been blessed that two of those Interns accepted permanent positions on our Board after their Internship, and have passionately stepped into their roles of askers, ambassadors and advocates.”

- Korus Connect (Host Board)

1.0 Background

Young people – namely the millennial generation – are expected to account for [75% of the global workforce by 2025](#). Yet a McCrindle report found more than half of Board Members in Christian organisations are aged over 55.

In this age, the importance of connecting with young people – particularly young Christians – and having their voice in the boardroom is greater than ever. And for experienced Board Members, they have an opportunity to mentor and raise up the next generation of Christian leaders.

The Board Internship was established to equip young people for future Board positions with hands-on experience and structured mentorship. Through this, the Internship helps create a talent pool of future directors for the diverse and growing Christian church, charity and not-for-profit sectors.

The success of the Internship after a one-year pilot saw the Host Board gaining two out of their three Interns (with the third finding a position elsewhere).

2.0 Overview of the Program

PURPOSE

The Board Internship exists to develop the next generation of Board Members for Christian boardrooms across Australia.

MISSION

The aim of the Internship is to provide Christian students, graduates and workers under 35 with professional development experience and mentorship through a 12-month Board Internship.

PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

The program is structured around a 12-month internship with six main components: Board involvement; mentorship; facilitated learning opportunities; fundraising; networking opportunities; and internship support.

Working within this structure, Interns will obtain working knowledge and a practical understanding of the key governance issues essential for well-functioning Boards, whilst contributing a fresh perspective for Host Boards facing today's issues.

A key principle of the Internship is to ensure Interns receive hands-on experience and become genuinely part of the operations of the Host Board.

Board Involvement

Interns are expected to attend all Board meetings. While they do not have formal voting rights, they will receive all Board papers and minutes, and may be seconded onto appropriate subcommittees (risk, audit, etc.) and working groups, at the discretion of the Host Board and depending on their availability.

OUTCOME: Fresh input and contributions that support the long-term growth and health of the Host Board and organisation.

Mentorship

Interns will be paired with an individual Board Member who will act as their Mentor throughout the 12-month Internship and be available to offer advice, field questions, exchange feedback and personally support the Intern.

A Mentor will be an experienced Board Member on the Host Board. The Nominations Committee will consult with the Host Board and proposed Board Members through a comprehensive review process to nominate Mentors, ensuring effective and balanced pairings.

In addition to structured one-on-one meetings throughout the year (whether in-person or over a video/voice call), the Mentor and Intern will be supported in developing their own specific mentorship program, which can be monitored and measured against agreed upon performance criteria.

OUTCOME: Personal fulfilment in guiding and passing on wisdom to a younger peer, and mutual growth through learning from each other.

Facilitated Learning Opportunities

Interns will participate in facilitated strategy and professional development sessions alongside other Interns from their cohort and in a broader context. These will expose Interns to a range of foundational governance topics.

Interns will participate in:

- Two CMA Conferences which have approximately 50 plenary and elective sessions to learn from leading speakers in the areas of governance; fundraising; ministry staffing/HR; and tax, finance and legal issues
- A CMA Ministry Governance Conference at their nearest capital city which will cover what makes Christian Boards different from secular Boards; the legal responsibility of Board Members; risk management; understanding financial statements; and the difference between governance and management
- Webinars from leading Australian and international experts on governance issues such as: corporate governance, strategy setting

and oversight; values and heart; communications and reputation management; government relations; fundraising; Board etiquette; Board/CEO relations; and advocacy.

These sessions will also provide opportunities for Interns to network with their peers and meet successful speakers from a range of backgrounds.

In addition, we would expect Host Boards to include Interns in their own Board development training and for Mentors to identify additional networking or professional development opportunities (such as business breakfasts, seminars or industry events) which Interns are free to attend outside the existing facilitated learning opportunities.

Interns will also receive a reading list of recommended resources to utilise for their own growth.

OUTCOME: Broadening and refinement of skills associated with Board and upper management levels, and enhanced ability to contribute to Board deliberations.

Fundraising

Effective Board Members hold key responsibilities as askers, ambassadors and advocates for the organisation. With the view of building up Interns to take on these duties, Interns will be trained and equipped to act as effective “askers” and will be given the opportunity to assist in a fund-raising campaign to apply their new skills, the funds from which will go towards reducing the cost of the program.

Networking Opportunities

In addition to the networking opportunities at the CMA Conferences, graduate Interns will also have the option of being listed on the CMA Directory and may join the Program Alumni Group, with further networking opportunities and discounted prices on selected CMA events for 5 years.

OUTCOME: Opportunities to grow networks and relationships across the Christian and other sectors.

Internship Support

Interns and Mentors will be engaged in regular reviews to obtain feedback and input that will help ensure the Internship remains effective. Additionally, Interns, Mentors and Host Boards will undertake formal reviews at the six-month and 12-month mark of the program.

Upon satisfactory completion of the Internship, Host Boards and Mentors will attend a celebratory dinner where Interns will receive a certificate of competence. Host Boards and Mentors will look to identify opportunities to refer Interns on to assist further with their career and professional development.

OUTCOME: For Interns, a certificate of competence, Board opportunities and, where appropriate and available, referrals to open Board positions. For Host Boards, potential new Board Members and the creation of a pool of qualified and trained directors for the Christian sector.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Potential Host Boards will need to show that they have well-functioning Boards and are committed to high standards of governance, accountability and transparency (for example, by having been accredited by the CMA Standards Council), with at least one Board Member who is suitable to be a Mentor.

Candidates seeking to participate in the Internship must be under 35. They will need to submit their most recent resume and complete an online application form.

Upon receipt, we will conduct an initial reference check to obtain an endorsement from the candidate's church community. If needed, an additional professional referee may be requested from the candidate.

Satisfactory references will progress the candidate to a first-stage interview with the Nominations Committee. A second-stage interview may occur if deemed necessary.

After the successful candidates are identified, Host Boards will be contacted and the placement process will commence.

THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

Interns may, in their initial application, nominate a preferred sector (understanding that this doesn't guarantee a placement there and is pending availability and alignment). The Nominations Committee will consider an Intern's background, experience, location, interests and the Host Board's mission, location and needs.

The Nominations Committee will propose an Intern to a Host Board with a recommendation of which Board Member to pair the Intern with for mentorship. Placement is not confirmed until both the Host Board and Mentor agree to the Committee's recommendation.

BENEFITS

Participation in the Internship by a Host Board is a measurable demonstration of being socially responsible and invested in younger generations – qualities that enhance brand reputation and attractiveness. A young person who sees that an organisation is committed to supporting the professional development of young people, is likely to think more favourably of that organisation and, perhaps, consider joining or supporting it.

Interns also bring a myriad of fresh perspectives and ideas to Board discussions, which can promote robust, multi-faceted decision-making. As initial outsiders to the organisation and the Board, Interns can help identify opportunities for improvement around practices and processes ingrained in organisational and Board procedures.

By participating in the Internship, Host Boards also gain access to a network of qualified and experienced alumni from which to recruit for potential Board positions in the future, thereby aiding in succession planning.

The Internship also provides Host Board Members with the opportunity to act as Mentors. Mentorship is an extremely gratifying opportunity and comes with an assurance that one's investment will better the personal and professional life of a younger peer. In an environment where disengaged Board Members can be commonplace, the opportunity to mentor can increase the commitment of Board Members to the organisation and their positions.

Ultimately, The Board Internship equips, empowers and releases young Christians to live out their faith in a Board setting across the Christian not-for-profit sector and the secular space. In this way, the Internship adopts a Kingdom-lens in building up and sending out others.

RISKS

Host Boards face minimal to no risk by participating in the Internship. Background checks and a comprehensive selection process ensure the selection of credible Interns. A personalised placement process also ensures Interns are allocated into suitable Boards. Interns will attend all meetings of the Host Board as observers rather than as voting Board Members, and are required to sign binding Confidentiality Deeds. Interns and Host Boards will also be given guidance to minimise the risk of Interns taking on the legal liabilities and obligations of Board Members. Lastly, open and regular feedback points help all parties address unexpected issues.

THE ROLE OF THE HOST BOARD

The Host Board appoints the Intern as an “observer”, exposing them to the inner workings of an organisational Board and providing personal and professional mentorship through nominated Mentors.

We expect that a Host Board will:

- Invite the Intern to every Board meeting for the year of the program (at least 4 per annum)
- Where appropriate, provide opportunities to Interns to sit on subcommittees
- Provide the same training opportunities to Interns as are provided to other Board Members
- Provide opportunities for Interns to attend all events which Board Members would ordinarily be expected to attend (e.g. the AGM, Strategy Day/Weekend, Board dinners)
- Pro-actively seek to include the Intern in Board discussions and ask their views on issues
- Not exclude an Intern from any issues (no matter how sensitive) unless in accordance with the Host's Conflict of Interest Policy

- Support Mentors in their role and, if necessary, provide a replacement Mentor if the appointed Mentor is unable to continue to fulfil their role for any reason
- Have at least one representative available to attend the CMA Conference, and in particular the Program Event on the Tuesday night, at the commencement and at the conclusion of the program year
- Be an ambassador for and generally promote the Internship (e.g. by recommending it to potential candidates)
- Pay a \$1,000 contribution to the costs of the Internship.

THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Board Mentors are proposed by the Host Board and screened by the Nominations Committee to ensure suitability and availability for the role.

The obligations of a Board Mentor include the following:

- Assist the Intern in developing clear goals for the Internship period
- Familiarise the Intern with the Host Organisation's people, culture, structure, vision, and programmatic and financial operations
- Support the growth of the Intern in becoming a proficient Board Member
- Receive and give feedback to the Intern before and/or after each Board meeting
- Engage intentionally in and support the purpose, mission and processes of the Internship. This includes conferring about how to best utilise the Intern's time and talent to enhance their experience
- Connect the Intern with relevant people in their network and professional events, where appropriate.

Mentors are expected to commit to at least three meetings with the Intern before or after Board meetings (either in person or virtually). In addition, Mentors are highly encouraged to meet or check-in with their Intern outside Board meetings. These meetings should, in part, cover Board-related topics such as Board issues, policy making, budgeting, risk, allocations, projects, culture, compliance and advocacy.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERN

Interns come from a variety of backgrounds. Applicants to the Internship are filtered by the Nominations Committee, firstly through a selection process (which includes an application

form and church endorsement) and a placement process in consultation with the Host Board.

Throughout their Internship, Interns are expected, amongst other things, to:

- Commit to their self-development personally and professionally, including taking initiative to learn and hone their skills, as guided by their specific mentorship program
- Be open and honest with their Mentor about their goals, expectations, challenges, concerns and overall feedback
- Respectfully utilise their Mentor's time, resources and experience
- Stay accessible and responsive during their Internship
- Actively engage with the Internship through the tasks set for them and in other areas where initiative is required
- Find another suitable candidate from their networks for the next year's placement.

Legal Position

Interns will be attending all meetings of the Host Board as observers rather than as voting Board Members. The Host will not appoint them as formal members of the Host Board, and will not notify them to the ACNC as Responsible Persons.

Responsible Persons take on certain duties and obligations under the common law and legislation. Although Interns will not be formally appointed as Responsible Persons, it is theoretically possible that an Intern could also take on those duties and obligations if he or she were deemed a "de facto director" (ie, a person exercising all the powers of a director, but under another title) or a "shadow director" (ie, a person who by their influence effectively controls the decisions of a majority of the Board). We have taken legal advice on this issue in respect of The Board Internship. We believe that, provided that Interns and Host Boards follow the steps below, the likelihood of them being deemed to be de facto directors or shadow directors solely by taking part in The Board Internship is remote:

- Have it noted in the Minutes of each meeting that the Intern attends as an "observer only"
- The Intern should participate in discussions regarding Board matters, but not vote on any resolution or be part of any "consensus" decision
- The Intern should not carry out any managerial, legal or other function for the Host or its Board

- The Intern should not be referred to, or hold themselves out, as a Board member of the Host
- The Intern should not give instructions to staff or volunteers of the Host

Confidentiality

Interns will be exposed to or become aware of a substantial amount of private and confidential information concerning the Host Board, the Host itself and possibly third parties that the Host deals with (such as staff and those the Host serves). It is of the utmost importance that all such private and confidential information be kept confidential, both during and after the internship. For the protection of all parties, Interns will be required to sign a Confidentiality Deed prepared by us to this effect.

Testimonials

“In late 2017, I found myself sitting in a boardroom being interviewed for a Board Internship ... Was I just signing myself up for more meetings?

[Korus Connect] offered an applied learning experience for their Board Internship.

While this included observing Board meetings, it was much more than this! This year, I have collaborated with my fellow Interns to contribute to a Board working group; received formal training through attending a Board Development Day and numerous breakfast briefings; as well as receiving much wisdom from my assigned Mentor.

I recommend this Internship to anyone wanting to learn about organisational management and strategy from a new perspective.”

- Sarah (Former Intern)

“It is an honour to be a Mentor in the Board Internship process at Korus Connect. [The] recruitment of Interns has been very thorough and brought very talented people to the Program. The insights of the Interns bring a fresh dimension to the Board and enables us to view Board matters through a younger lens. The Interns are also gaining insight into the workings of a Board and how to contribute to strategic discussions.”

- John (Mentor)