

Testimonial

“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)

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.

BENEFITS

Mentorship is an extremely gratifying role and comes with an assurance that one's investment will better the personal and professional life of a younger peer. The opportunity to pass on wisdom and life experience to the next generation by becoming a Mentor is a chance to leave a legacy which will live on long after the Mentor leaves the Host Board.

Ultimately, The Board Internship allows Mentors to equip, empower and release 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.

In addition, 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 ROLE OF THE MENTOR

The Mentor is matched with an Intern, who is appointed as an “observer” to the Host Board, exposing the Intern to the inner workings of an organisational Board and providing personal and professional mentorship.

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.

Mentor training will be provided prior to the commencement of the Internships from an experienced Mentor to deal with any questions an aspiring Mentor may have.

Testimonial

“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)

3.0 Appendix – A Selection of Recommended Reading

General Mentoring

Common Sense Mentoring (Larry Ambrose)

The Mentee’s Navigator (Larry Ambrose)

Communication

Active Listening – Improve Your Ability to Listen and Lead (Michael Hoppe)

Questions That Work (Andrew Finlayson)

Taking the Stress Out of Stressful Conversations (Holly Weeks – Harvard Business Review, July 2001)

Feedback

Giving Feedback: Pocket Mentor Series (Harvard Business School)

Trust

The Decision to Trust (Robert F. Hurley – Harvard Business Review, September 2006)