

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)

1.0 Background

The importance of a young person’s voice – particularly a young Christian voice – in the boardroom is now greater than ever.

The Board Internship was established to equip young people for future Board positions with hands-on experience and structured mentorship.

For young professionals in the workforce, the Internship represents an opportunity for upskilling and preparation for career progression into leadership positions, especially on boards and councils.

For students and graduates, the Internship offers them an opportunity to gain real-world experience to enhance employability, build key enterprise skills and grow their network.

Above all, the Internship provides a way for young Christians to make a positive impact on the strategies of organisations which are actively working to carry out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

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: Working knowledge and sufficient experience to be considered competent voting members of a Board.

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: Insight and awareness of what it means to be a Board Member, and an established relationship with a potential future referee.

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; setting an organisation's culture; values and heart; communications and reputation management; government relations; fundraising; reading financial statements; risk management; 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, Host Boards and Mentors will include Interns in their own Board development training and 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.

Training and support will be provided to help equip Interns with their roles as askers.

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 within 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: Certificate of competence, board opportunities and, where appropriate and available, referrals to open board positions.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Candidates seeking to participate in the Internship must be between 22 and 35 years old. 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.

Successful candidates will be moved to a pool of unplaced Interns to undergo a placement process. Unsuccessful candidates will be contacted.

THE PLACEMENT PROCESS

Unplaced Interns will be cross-referenced with a pool of Host Boards. 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.

THE ROLE OF THE INTERN

Throughout their Internship, Interns are expected 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
- Attend the relevant CMA Conferences
- Attend the compulsory webinars either at the time of the webinar or later by a recorded download
- Be available for assessment meetings with Program Coordinators
- Find another suitable candidate from their networks for the next year's placement
- Sign a Confidentiality Deed undertaking to treat all information provided by and discussions of their Host Board with the utmost confidentiality
- Generally, act as ambassadors for the Internship.

Legal Position

Interns will be attending all meetings of the Host Board as observers rather than as voting Board Members. Provided they stay within the confines of the attached legal opinion, they are highly unlikely to be deemed to have taken on the legal obligations and responsibilities of Board Members.

Cost

The Board Internship is absolutely free of charge to each Intern.

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)