

SIUE CSPA Students Make an Impact via Remote National Internships

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EDWARDSVILLE – Internships are valuable development opportunities that allow students to apply their knowledge in an active work environment and strengthen skillsets for their future careers.

Unfortunately, in all sectors, including higher education, many summer internships have been canceled since the onset of COVID-19. However, some students from the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville College Student Personnel Administration (CSPA) graduate program are fortunate to be able to complete their competitive national internships remotely.

CSPA student Telayah Richards is remotely interning at Georgia State University through August 10, working with new student orientation. Fellow student Kayla Ward, a first-generation college student, is gaining experience through a remote internship at California State University Fullerton (CSUF). Also completing a remote internship is

CSPA's Shelby Ireland, who is contributing to the SIUE's Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Office in New Student Transitions.

"I am glad students will have the opportunity to continue with their national internships in an alternative format amidst these unprecedented times," said Candace Hall, EdD, CSPA instructor and assistant program director. "Some institutions have offered to create ways for our students to engage with their programs and students despite the pandemic. Our local partners, SIUE being chief among them, have been phenomenal in offering alternative internship options for those students whose national placements have been canceled."

"Throughout both my undergraduate and graduate careers, internships have been essential in my process of finding purpose and gaining knowledge," said Ward, of Liberty. "In conjunction with my CSPA courses, I can apply what I learn in the classroom to real-life situations. The connections you build and experience gained are irreplaceable."

Ward is eager to contribute to CSUF's Titan Orientation Programs, which have switched gears to focus on online student engagement.

"The team will be building a community for both incoming and current students through many different means, such as webinars, panel discussions and social media campaigns," she explained. "I'm grateful that CSUF is committed to integrating its interns into all aspects of that goal."

Richards, of Springfield, appreciates the opportunity to grow and develop through her remote internship. She pursued the CSPA program, because she knew she was destined to work in higher education.

"I loved everything about my college experience, and it dawned on me that my career should be in higher education," Richards said. "I would like to serve as a dean of students at a four-year institution."

The challenges faced in higher education have been plentiful amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The CSPA students are developing professionals driven to assist students during a pivotal time in their lives. Their impact will be enhanced as they guide new and current students through this unprecedented beginning of their college careers.

"I have found a passion for helping students find their home at their university," said Ireland, of Spaulding. "I want to be that support for new students and help guide them to

success. Internships can help solidify goals and what you want out of your career. I am honored to be able to continue what I love to do, which is learning how to impact students' lives."

Ireland is assisting in planning and implementation of the SIUE Experience, the University's extended orientation for new students. She is also interviewing and hiring Cougar Guides.

"It has been a smooth transition working online for my internship," Ireland said. "My supervisor has done a tremendous job helping support me through the transition and ensuring I receive the resources I need to be successful. We are working through Microsoft Teams and Zoom to collaborate and plan. Ultimately, my responsibilities have remained almost the same, as I am fortunate to continue them remotely."

The [SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior](#) prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.