

## America's Urban Campus®

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1 East Jackson Blvd. Ste. 2006, Chicago, IL 60604 | [www.americasurbancampus.org](http://www.americasurbancampus.org)

### **Memorandum: To the Lori Lightfoot Mayoral Transition**

**Date: April 24, 2019**

**Name: America's Urban Campus®**

**Contact: David Baker, Executive Director, [Dbaker25@depaul.edu](mailto:Dbaker25@depaul.edu), (C) 773.519.1440**

### **Transition Committee: Education and Youth**

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#### *A potential initiative:*

Expansion of paid internships for students of color and first generation students attending Chicago's universities and colleges.

*How the new administration can infuse the values of equity, transparency, accountability, diversity and inclusion, and transformation in that initiative:*

The success experienced by Chicago Public Schools graduates in enrolling in and graduating from two and four year institutions in Chicago has generated a new issue—concern that these graduates, particularly Pell eligible, students of color and first generation students, do not have the same connections, preparation and skills to obtain positions that reflect their education. Most of these students also need paid internships as they must earn money to pay for college and family commitments. Further, more and more employers look to students' experience with internships while in college as a measure of job preparedness—even using the internship to gauge a student's fit with the company for a full time position.

By recognizing and encouraging foundation and industry support of this initiative, the new administration can contribute directly to improving equity in the hiring process of new Chicago college graduates, and help to support more diversity and inclusion in the hiring process. This initiative directly supports the Mayor's vision of strengthening communities of the South and West sides as most of the graduates affected come from these neighborhoods.

This initiative will also help stem the loss of population in the City, particularly for graduates of color, as internships boost post-graduation hiring by local firms prompting graduates to stay and raise their families in the city.

*To advance this initiative, what is happening today that we need to keep?*

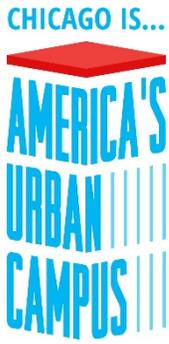
America's Urban Campus® (AUC) was established in 2011 by Chicago's universities and colleges with a mission to promote Chicago as a global destination for higher education and leverage the institutions' resources for the benefit of its citizens. AUC has 22 institutions, including City Colleges of Chicago, educating 96% of Chicago's post-secondary students. The universities' presidents have agreed to both financially support this collaboration and to meet annually to set the agenda and priorities.

#### **Member Institutions**

Adler University  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology  
Chicago State University  
City Colleges of Chicago  
Columbia College Chicago  
DePaul University  
East-West University  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
The John Marshall Law School  
Loyola University Chicago  
National Louis University  
North Park University  
Northeastern Illinois University  
Northwestern University  
Robert Morris University  
Roosevelt University  
Rush University  
Saint Xavier University  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
University of Chicago  
University of Illinois at Chicago

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To further its mission, AUC has established a collaborative of the institutions' career services directors, who have identified the issue of paid internships as critical to the placement of their students. AUC is already working with the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and members of the foundation community to define and develop this initiative. The Chicago Opportunity Exchange, run under the aegis of the Chicagoland Chamber and supported by the J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation, provides the digital platform for matching students with internships--AUC institutions' job listing sites are all linked to the platform now.

### *What we need to implement in the next 100 days:*

Recognize this issue as a critical component of the city's overall strategy for student success and building an equitable talent pipeline. Assign an education policy staff person to participate in the discussions already underway to formulate a city-wide strategy.

Participation and engagement from Mayor Lightfoot at the AUC Annual University President's meeting at Noon on October 30, 2019 on the Northwestern University Chicago Campus hosted by Morton Shapiro. A formal invitation is forthcoming.

### *What we can plan for longer-term implementation:*

Work with the city's business associations and industry to promote expanded offerings of internships. Encourage the foundation community to provide financial support to launch the initiative, including workshops for small and medium sized employers on development of internship programs, grants for subsidies to neighborhood businesses and non-profits to hire interns, and support for a database to track success of the program.

### *What challenges we might encounter in executing on this initiative:*

The main challenge will be to overcome the reluctance of small and medium employers to commit the time and resources to internships, and the potential of bias in extending internships to students of color and first generation students. The concerted effort of the city, business associations, the universities and the foundations will be needed to address this challenge.