**Introduction:**

In today's competitive job market, having relevant work experience is essential for undergraduates and recent graduates seeking to secure their first job or internship. Many students at UBC struggle with this issue, and as an institution promoting excellence in learning, UBC has a responsibility to address this challenge. One solution is to create more paid positions within the university itself to serve as entry-level work experiences. However, the current programs in place are extremely competitive, and many alumni feel unsatisfied with the value of their degree.

**Audience Description:**

This proposal is directed towards UBC undergraduates and alumni.

**Statement of Problem:**

Many UBC undergraduates and recent graduates face significant challenges in landing their first relevant job or internship due to the lack of relevant work experience. The current programs in place, including co-op and internships, are highly competitive, and students who cannot secure a position are left with little to no work experience to add to their resumes. This puts them at a significant disadvantage in a job market that demands experience for almost every role. Furthermore, expecting students to rely on unpaid extracurriculars to boost their resumes is discriminatory, as many students from low-income households may not have the time to dedicate summer terms to unpaid positions while working to cover the high cost of living in Vancouver.

**Proposed Solution:**

To address these challenges, UBC should expand its co-op programs to include more paid positions and offer automatic placement in a co-op position on campus to students who adequately attend all conferences, workshops, and apply to over the specified amount of co-op positions but are still unable to land a position. By doing so, UBC can provide entry-level work experiences to students who are putting in the effort to gain relevant work experience but are simply faced with bad luck in the application process. This will also help reduce the discrimination faced by low-income students, who often cannot afford to take on unpaid work.

**Scope:**

To evaluate the demand for and feasibility of implementing more co-op, internship, and part-time positions for students at UBC, the following areas of inquiry will be explored:

* What are the current challenges UBC students face when seeking to secure relevant work experience?
* What are the potential benefits of expanding co-op programs at UBC?
* How many UBC students are unable to secure a co-op position even after adequately attending all conferences, workshops, and applying to over the specified number of co-op positions?
* What are the potential drawbacks of expanding co-op programs at UBC?
* What are the most effective ways to ensure that all UBC students have the opportunity to gain relevant work experience?

**Methods:**

The primary data source for this proposal will be a survey of UBC students to gather first-hand information on their experiences with landing internships and relevant work experiences during their undergraduate studies, and how this has impacted their job search as alumni. Secondary sources will include relevant publications on the challenges facing students seeking to gain relevant work experience.

**My Qualifications:**

As a former UBC undergraduate student who went through the rigorous application process for Arts Co-op, I have first-hand experience with the challenges that UBC students face when trying to secure relevant work experience. Despite attending all the workshops, conferences, and practice interviews and applying to over 30 jobs, I was still left without a co-op position. I am familiar with the application process and the reality that some students may leave their undergraduate years unequipped to successfully land a job after graduation.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the lack of relevant work experience for UBC students is a significant challenge that needs to be addressed. UBC has a responsibility to support its students in securing their first job or internship. By exploring the feasibility of expanding co-op programs, UBC can provide a safety net for students who have put in the effort but are still unable to secure relevant work experience. With your approval, I will begin researching this solution.