To: Dr. Erika Paterson, English 301 Instructor, Department of English, The University of British Columbia

From: Cathy Liu, Student in English 301

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Subject: Formal Proposal for Improving the Internship Course Placement of University of Toronto Mississauga Commerce students

**Introduction**

Nowadays, a lot of the Top-Tier universities offer co-op programs that help prepare students starting off their career. These programs provide exposure to the real-world working environment and allow students to explore where their passion lies. With the ever-changing evolution in technology, the job markets for fresh graduates are getting more and more competitive. Students in the Commerce program are expected to excel in multiple aspects such as academic performance, networking skills, soft skills, relevant work experience, and extracurricular activities (case competitions). Although UTM have not offer co-op programs at all for the past decades, it recently opened an internship course that matches around 20 qualified students with employers in relevant sectors, while providing guidance, support, and evaluations along the way. This course has attracted many students, but only around 20 people get placements for each semester.

The audience for this proposal is the MGT480 Course Director and Professional Development and Internships Coordinator from the Department of management of University of Toronto Mississauga. This course has provided great value and experience for many students; therefore, I hope more students can get the exposure and benefit from it.

**Problem Statement**

The internship course (MGT480) opened recently has provided great opportunities for students to explore the job market and working environment, as well as providing valuable experience which increase the likelihood of landing a full-time position in the industry. However, this program is not attracting enough employers. This could be a result from decreasing demand in commerce-related positions, competition from other universities, or not enough marketing to connect with employers. As a result, it is extremely competitive to get accepted into the course and find a placement. As a result, students who does not have much work experience will struggle to find suitable jobs upon graduation.

**Proposed Solution**

This proposal provides a cost-effective and realistic plan to attract more employers to connect with UTM Commerce students and potentially improve the placement rate. The key to resolve the problem is to attract more employers through utilizing social media platforms and implementing marketing strategy, along with providing mentor support and interview preparation (such as pairing students up to practice interview with previous graduates and course coordinators).

**Scope**

In order to access the feasibility of increasing the placement rate of MGT480, I prepared a few questions:

1. What is the current marketing strategy of MGT480 in finding suitable employers for Commerce students?
2. What is the current platform that UTM is using in attracting employers?
3. How much support is the course providing in terms of interview preparation and mentorship?
4. What are the main challenges in finding suitable employers?
5. How likely will students enrol in this internship course given sufficient mentorship and interview preparation support?
6. What kind of mentorship support is better? One on one or in a group setting?

**Methods**

My primary data sources will include an interview with the course coordinator ([Meghan Tamane](mailto:meghan.tamane@utoronto.ca)) and a survey to be completed by former MGT480 students. My secondary data source is a survey to be completed by the current UTM MGT 480 students.

**My Qualification**

I graduated with a Commerce degree from University of Toronto Mississauga in 2018. In my fourth year, I was accepted into MGT480 (the internship course) and worked for a startup as a financial analyst. I was very familiar with the initial applying and screening process, the interview process, as well as the evaluation process. As a former student from this course, my first-hand experience and my connection with the course coordinator will definitely support me for an in-depth study.

**Conclusion**

As a former Commerce student from UTM, I am well aware the challenges and competition students are facing nowadays. In order to prepare commerce students to kick start their professional career in today’s job market, the MGT480 Course Director and Course Coordinator need to take action to increase the placement rate of this course. By researching the scoped topics, I am confident to develop a feasible plan to improve the placement rate of the internship course. With your approval, I will begin research promptly.