

Jennifer Summers discovered that the two-year, part-time internship she chose to be close to her terminally ill father also provides diverse professional experiences.



ORLOW KENT NYGREN

A push for PART TIME?

Half-time internships—though not mainstream yet—enable some students to better manage professional and personal obligations. **BY JENNIFER DAW HOLLOWAY**

The internship is a milestone that often sends students cross-country for professional training. For some, the move can be a welcome adventure. But for others, it's a daunting challenge.

For example, Jennifer Summers, a fourth-year clinical psychology doctoral student at Antioch New England Graduate School, didn't want to uproot her life for internship because her father was diagnosed with a terminal illness.

"I also anticipated his death and

knew I wouldn't have the energy to apply for internship...so I asked if I could postpone the process," she says.

Rather than postpone, her adviser encouraged her to apply early for a part-time slot he knew was available. She's now a two-year, part-time intern at the Carson Center for Adults and Families in Westfield, Mass., and she'll finish her internship at the same time as the students in her class who choose to do a full-time internship.

However, opportunities like Summers's internship are rare. In fact, of more than 600 internships listed by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC), only 17 sites offer part-time slots.

"Forty years ago, the typical student was a young, white male unencumbered by family," says Lorraine Mangione, PhD, director of practice for the Antioch New England Graduate School's department of clinical psychology. Now, she says,

the graduate student population is far more diverse: "Many of them are having kids or caring for older parents, for example, or just want to stay local."

For a growing number of students, full-time internships—especially those that mean uprooting to another city or state—aren't ideal.

"In our group of doctoral students, we hear from them that they're interested in half-time internships," says Mangione. "It's time that the field responds to them."

Indeed, in addition to internship sites offering more flexible options, doctoral programs can also do more by establishing relationships with community agencies that might welcome part-time interns, says Paul Nelson, PhD, deputy executive director of APA's education directorate.

"By having such contacts with community agencies, doctoral programs also can ensure that, for students requiring part-time internships, their two years of half-time placement are properly coordinated and sequenced," says Nelson. For example, programs can ensure students' training meets its requirements for a doctoral degree and that it builds upon, rather than repeats, previous experiences.

Straight talk on part time

In spite of their rarity, part-time internships provide several advantages, says Luli Emmons, PhD, executive director of the California Psychology Internship Council (CAPIC). Students have the opportunity to work with diverse and underserved populations—such as the homeless, the incarcerated, children and the elderly—because the internship sites are often located in nontraditional, community settings. These sites often only have the resources to have half-time internships.

And according to David Arbeitman, PhD, a faculty member in the PsyD program in clinical psy-

Tapping into part time

Experts and students alike admit that part-time internships can be hard to come by. So if you're interested, what steps can you take? Luli Emmons, PhD, executive director of the California Psychology Internship Council, gives some advice:

- Check out the APPIC-member and APA-accredited internship sites.
- Seek the support of your doctoral program to help develop half-time internships.
- Identify potential programs in the community—or consortia of programs—that could be internship sites.
- Don't compromise your professional development. Even if you decide to do an unaccredited internship, make sure your training meets the field's standards, she says: "Students need to protect themselves and make sure they are getting training that meets the criteria of APPIC."

—J. DAW HOLLOWAY

chology at Antioch New England and director of intern training at the Carson Center for 15 years, part-time internships give students more flexibility to manage their families.

But why do so few part-time opportunities exist if the advantages are seemingly so clear? According to

Mangione, there's no official stance against them. "But it seems like for internship sites, they're hard to do—it's partly inertia, since there are already full-time slots created," she says.

Moreover, APPIC requires its members to employ the equivalent of

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two full-time interns, meaning part-time programs must have four part-timers to become a member site. That can be problematic in terms of, for example, providing enough supervision, says Arbeitman.

"Part-timers must obtain the same amount of supervision and training as full-time interns," he explains.

"Maybe some sites don't see part-time internships as cost-effective," adds Mangione. Though for the Carson Center, there's less start-up and wind-down time because interns work for two years, which translates into greater productivity and cost-effectiveness, Arbeitman notes.

However, those sites that do offer part-time slots often aren't APPIC members or viewed as highly in the field, says Emmons, who adds that approximately 70 percent of the 140 CAPIC member internships are part-time, though not APA-accredited or APPIC members.

And experts say that nonaccredited internships may jeopardize students' licensure applications and future mobility, since most states require an internship to meet certain standards. While APPIC-member and APA-accredited sites generally meet those criteria, non-APA-accredited and non-APPIC programs may be less certain. (For specifics, see www.asppb.org/pubs/handbookusr.asp.)

In some states, though, the rules are more flexible. In Texas, for example, psychologists can get licensed through unaccredited internships if the internships meet the Texas Board of Psychology's standards. And in California, the state board accepts APPIC or CAPIC standards for licensure.

But some students just don't want to chance it. Summers says she wouldn't have applied had her internship not been APA-accredited: "It's expensive to get your doctorate. I don't want to have to go back and fulfill requirements at a later time."

Members of the psychology training community are beginning to

take such student concerns into account. In fact, CAPIC is organizing a conference, "The half-time internship: Coming into the mainstream," in Berkeley, Calif., April 29–30, to stimulate more interest and action nationally in developing half-time internships, notes Ted Packard, PhD, chair of APA's Committee on Accreditation (CoA). CAPIC encourages students to attend the meeting, which aims to develop some standards and guidelines for part-time internships, says Emmons, the conference chair. Participants will include leaders in psychology education, representatives from APPIC, APA's CoA and the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology, among others. Details are posted at www.capic.net/info/capic_conference.html.

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Lorraine Mangione
Antioch New England
Graduate School

Staying put, finding variety

In the meantime, students are negotiating their own half-time training opportunities. For example, when it came time for Wright Institute professional psychology student Anasuya Dubey to apply for internship, she knew she wanted to stay in the San Francisco Bay Area and didn't want to overextend herself by doing a full-time internship while writing her dissertation.

"I primarily chose to do part time because of my dissertation," says Dubey. "And for me, not having to relocate was a major factor. My husband's business is here and that

would just be too much of a strain on my marriage."

Luckily, she says, "in California part-time internships seem to be very available." She's currently logging 20 hours a week at the University of San Francisco Counseling Center. Unlike Summers's internship, Dubey's doesn't last two years. She must apply again to another internship to meet her two-year requirement.

For Dubey, a part-time internship allows her to maintain a good balance between her personal and professional choices. "I'm a first generation immigrant, and I'm very involved in my community here. That takes a lot of my time," she says.

And her internship choice, although not APA-accredited, will still allow her to meet her professional goal of opening a local practice with a colleague because she can obtain California licensure.

The only thing that she says nags at her about her part-time decision is the time commitment: "Sometimes I think, 'why didn't I do this quicker?' I just want to finish."

However, that extra time can be a boon as well. For example, Summers says her part-time status has given her the chance to diversify her professional experiences.

"I work as an outpatient clinician one day a week, I attend classes and I do my internship 20 hours a week," she says. "I am able to do many things and enjoy more variety and diversity in my schedule." Plus, being in school and doing her internship at the same time allows her to apply the theory she's learning to her clinical work with patients.

As for her part-time status, she has no regrets: "I get the opportunity to work with the same colleagues for two years and some of the same patients for two years—I can build longer-term relationships this way," she says. ▶

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