

# SIGNAGE FOUNDATION, INC.

## Internship Program



*Building Partnerships for Research and Education*

In 2010, the Signage Foundation, Inc. launched the first formal sign industry/ student internship program.

The program was a direct result of the 2009 NSREC conference where the interaction of both Planning and Business students from the University of Cincinnati was recognized. It was felt that further interaction through a formal program of placing a student into a sign company internship would provide the student with an unprecedented understanding of signage from an industry perspective.

The fundamental concept of the internship program is that the academic experience of the student can be enhanced and a greater understanding and a life-long appreciation for the value of signs developed through a practical hands-on experience working directly with qualified and approved sign industry professionals.

In 2011, the program was expanded to include faculty members interested in the expansion of knowledge on signage and whose schedules would be able to accommodate a full or abbreviated program.

## SIGNAGE FOUNDATION ROLE

The Signage Foundation manages the program which includes:

- Screening and qualifying host sign companies;
- Working with host sign companies to understand the desired goal of experience and knowledge transfer to the student;
- Working with colleges or universities to identify interested students for placement and obtaining all needed approvals and recognition as an academic placement;
- Placing qualified students with an eligible host sign company;
- Assisting with and monitoring the interaction through reporting and on-site visits.

SFI will provide follow-up on the experience and provide a forum for student sharing of the experience.



Cody Meyer, UC Planning student served as the first intern and North Shore Sign Company of Libertyville (Chicago) as the first host company.

Cody's background included attendance at Kent State University located in northern Ohio where he studied architecture. Cody identified his intense interest in a more comprehensive and social perspective leading him to move toward studying neighborhood and community development. This interest led Cody to studying Urban Planning at the University of Cincinnati.

As part of his academic program, Cody participated in cooperative education. Co-op, which was invented at the University of Cincinnati, provides opportunities for students to practice in the workplace what they learn in the classroom. The School of Planning is the only school or department in the U.S. that offers an accredited undergraduate planning degree with required cooperative education. Cody will complete six studio projects prior to graduation, one being The Signage Foundation 2009 Studio project and another his North Shore Sign internship – making him well prepared for a career in planning after graduation.



North Shore Sign was selected as the first intern host company due to its position as a typical, full-service, mid-size, custom sign company, and reputable industry background. Founded in 1930, North Shore is a family-owned, full-service sign manufacturing and installation company that manufactures high-end custom signs for the local Chicago area market, and installs and maintains signs for national sign companies.

North Shore is a long-time ISA member and a member of WSA (World Sign Association) and the Illinois Sign Association Company President Duane Laska serves on the Board of Directors of both ISA and SFI.

*"I have definitely expanded my knowledge of the signage industry while serving as an industry intern at North Shore Sign Company."* – Cody Meyer

## STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

The student intern:

- Must be enrolled in a college or university with a recognized internship program.
- Should be at the junior level or higher.
- Should have participated in the National Signage Research and Education Conference (NSREC), a signage studio project or a marketing capstone project aligned with the Signage Foundation.
- Should be able to commit to the time requirements of the internship and be able to travel to the business destination.
- Should be pursuing a field of study that would benefit from the experience with the sign industry.

## HOST SIGN COMPANY REQUIREMENTS AND COMMITMENTS

The criteria for the sign industry business to participate will include:

- Commitment to assign a senior level staff member to coordinate the internship;
- Company should be a multi-faceted sign company with design, sales manufacturing and installation operations;
- Company should have been in business 10 years or more;
- Providing a written request to participate in the internship program and complete an SFI program application;
- Providing funds to the Signage Foundation for the costs of the internship (housing, travel and food stipend);
- Working with the intern to prepare a formal presentation and profile on the business to share in an on campus classroom experience and at NSREC;
- Demonstrating support of the Signage Foundation, Inc.;
- Being a member of at least one industry trade organization, ISA, WSA, etc.



While working with North Shore Sign Company, Cody was able to participate in the following scope of work:

- Experienced all aspects of the operation of North Shore Sign;
- Networked with local regulatory agencies;
- Developed a familiarity with a broad base of on premise signage—its purpose and effectiveness;
- Identified best practice examples of on premise signage;
- Networked with a number of sign industries;
- Developed a familiarity with the work and significance of the International Sign Association, the Signage Foundation and the World Sign Association;
- Developed strategic communication strategies chronicling his experience with North Shore Sign Company;
- Prepared a journal detailing various aspects of the North Shore operation;
- Developed a presentation on his experience while at North Shore Sign Company which was delivered at the 2010 NSREC on October 13-14, 2010;
- Shared his experience within the planning classroom setting;
- Assisted the Signage Foundation in developing a prototype for subsequent sign industry co-op experience;
- Participated in the 2010 Sign Expo and assisted with the Signage Foundation exhibit;
- Participated in the 2010 APA Conference and assisted with the Signage Foundation exhibit.

# AN INVITATION TO SPONSOR AN INTERNSHIP

The Signage Foundation proposes that a number of internships be developed to place these students with an eligible sign business to experience firsthand the various aspects of the sign industry. The students should be at the junior level or higher and should have participated in NSREC, a signage studio project or a marketing capstone project aligned with the Signage Foundation. The student will spend an academic quarter on site at a sign industry business.

Funding will be provided by the sponsoring sign business for travel, lodging and a stipend while on site. The sponsoring sign business will also assign a staff member to direct and oversee the work of the intern while on site.

SFI will manage the program including screening and qualifying sign company participants and assisting with monitoring the interaction. These internships will be approved and recognized by the college or university where the student is enrolled as an academic placement.

Thank you for your consideration of participating in this program either as:

1. a sponsor to provide funding for an internship.
2. a business site for the internship.
3. a full business partnership to provide both funding and site.

Please feel free to contact Patty Herbin at [patty@thesignagefoundation.org](mailto:patty@thesignagefoundation.org) or by calling 336-260-3197 if you have any questions or require additional information on the internship program.

Additional related information can be found on the following sites:

About the University of Cincinnati's Professional Practice program: [www.uc.edu/propractice](http://www.uc.edu/propractice)

About the University of Cincinnati's School of Planning: [www.daap.uc.edu/schools](http://www.daap.uc.edu/schools)

About the North Shore Sign Company [www.northshoresigns.com](http://www.northshoresigns.com)

About the Signage Foundation, Inc. [www.thesignagefoundation.org](http://www.thesignagefoundation.org)

About the Business Site Criteria [duanel@northshoresigns.com](mailto:duanel@northshoresigns.com)



[www.thesignagefoundation.org](http://www.thesignagefoundation.org)