Community Engaged Research Graduate Student Internship Program

Community Research Platform, Faculty of Social Sciences

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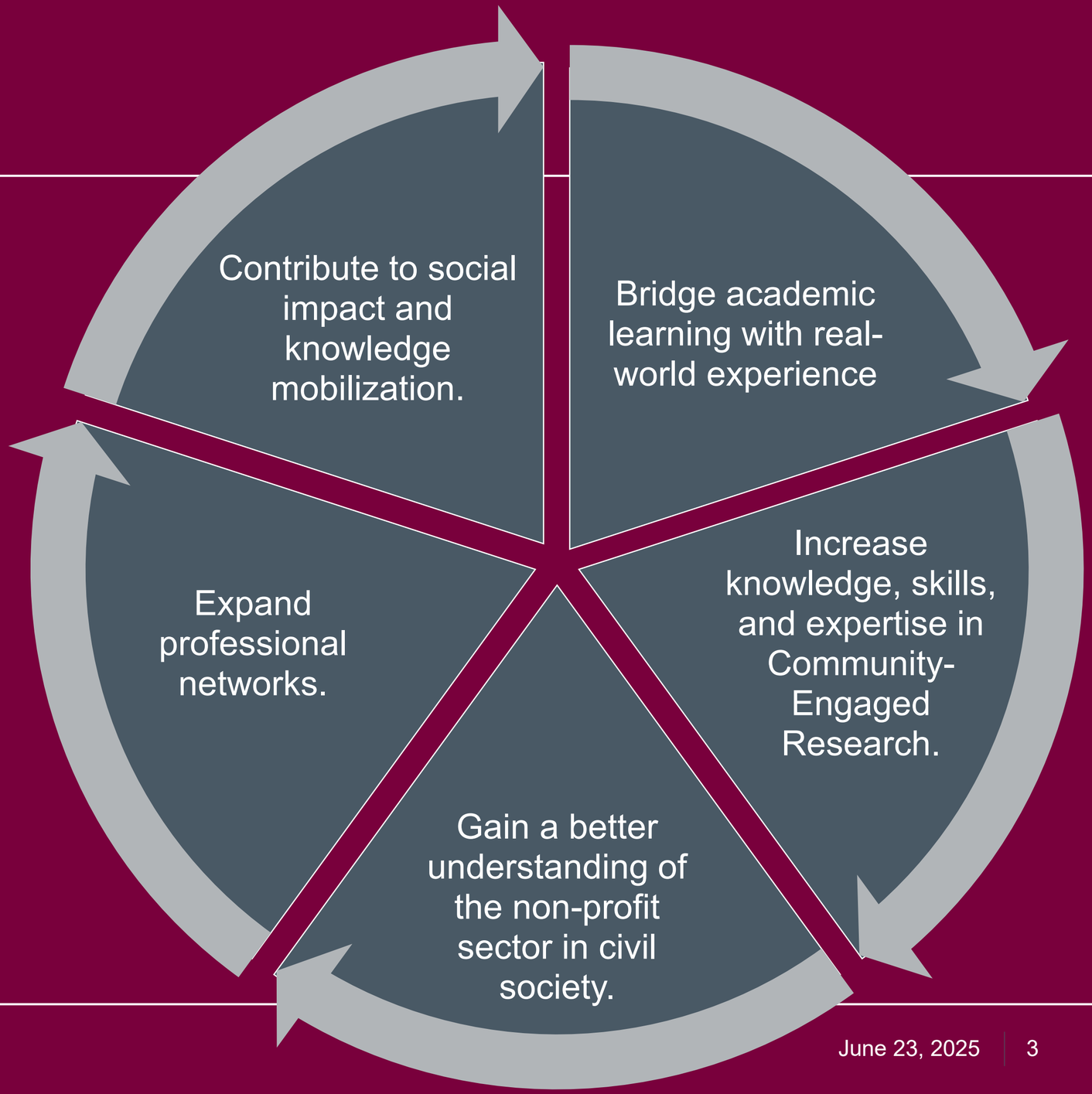
Community Engaged Research Grad Student Internship Program

- Launched in 2023 by FSS Community Research Platform
- Paid internships for grad students with one of the CRP's 5 partner organizations
- Interns work on research projects that address organizational needs and have tangible community benefits & social impact
- Completed over one or two academic terms
- Interns receive support and guidance from partner organization staff, CRP and faculty members
- 15 internships completed to date

Program Outcomes and Impact: Graduate Students

"What set it apart was the chance to see how my academic work could drive real-world change – an essential skill that has shaped my dissertation work and will continue to influence my career by making my research more impactful and accessible."

"I now have a deeper understanding of the principles of community engaged scholarship, specifically how to build vital trust and equity in research-practice partnerships, which is so valuable for me professionally and personally"



Program Outcomes and Impact: CRP Partner Organizations/Community

1. Increased research capacity
2. Access to research infrastructure and expertise (faculty, university libraries, ethics board, academic grants)
3. Evidence based data and analysis to support program and policy development and improvement
4. Project outputs/outcomes have a direct benefit to the community

"We have been able to tap into a highly motivated and skilled pool of graduate students at McMaster University. Their contributions have significantly increased our capacity to conduct and deliver high-calibre research, policy and program evaluation work."

"The interns' contributions strengthened the connections between our organization and academic researchers, making collaboration smoother, more productive, and more responsive to real-world challenges."

Program Outcomes and Impact: Faculty members/McMaster

1. Bolster research capacity of faculty members
2. Increased student research funding
3. Increased interdisciplinary and intersectoral research partnerships
4. Increased Tri-Council and external agency funding (SSHRC, Mitacs)
5. Expanding McMaster's commitment to being a civic university and promoting research, teaching and training that advances societal health and wellbeing

"CRP internships provide essential research support to organizations and faculty, allowing us to take on more ambitious, collaborative projects that we might not otherwise have the capacity to pursue."

"The Internship program was an invaluable opportunity for my doctoral students. It deepened their academic training through meaningful, real-world engagement which is foundational to their academic development."

Lessons Learned & Best Practices

1. Well-defined projects with clearly communicated deliverables work best
2. Support and guidance of CRP staff, faculty and organization point person critical to the success of internships
3. Paid internships remove a critical financial barrier to student uptake
4. Internships can be a catalyst for future projects and partnerships