

# Young professionals entering the workforce

## How PIA's Internship Program gives them an edge

By Kristen Dohrmann

**M**any images come to mind when you think of the month of June, including sunshine, the beginning of summer and, of course, graduation parties. Many graduates across the state are beginning their job search, that is, if they already haven't started their search. But, many recent graduates might be wondering how to get their foot in the door and how they can stand out from the numerous other graduates applying for jobs. What can give them the edge and put them a step above the rest? For some recent graduates, including Alishia Morehart, participating in PIA's Internship Program gave them the edge they needed.

"PIA's Internship Program helped my job search immensely," said 2008 intern Alishia Morehart. "I do not think I would have gotten the call backs or interviews I did without the internship on my resume. There are very few recent college graduates with experience in the insurance field, so the knowledge and experience I gained from participating in PIA's Internship Program certainly helped me get my foot in the door."

Embarking on that first job hunt can be frustrating and time consuming, but it is important to remain focused. Throughout the 10-week PIA Internship Program, PIA encourages interns to

analyze what types of positions would best suit their individual personalities; strengths and weaknesses; and ultimate career goals. Through a weekly Web log discussion, questions are posed to the interns to help them think about the type of work environment they want to be in and what position would best suit them. During the program, Morehart gained a better understanding of the type of work environment and the position she desired. The PIA Internship Program also exposed her to many available career opportunities within the insurance industry—many of which she was unaware exist prior to starting her internship.

"It was challenging to not get discouraged or just take the first job that was offered," Morehart said. "I interviewed with a couple life insurance companies last October and they were interested, but it just didn't feel like a good fit to me."

Morehart began her job search as soon as her internship ended by researching companies and agencies in her area and sending resumes and cover letters to several employers for which she felt she would be a good fit. She also took advantage of career services offered by her university by attending career fairs, which is a great way to explore options and make contacts with many different employers.

"The most surprising thing I discovered while job hunting was that it can take a few weeks or months to hear back from possible employers. Just when I thought a job opportunity was at a dead end after not hearing

from them for a few weeks, they would call back," Morehart said.

Networking also can play a large part in finding a position after graduation. PIA's Internship Program offers networking opportunities during and after the program. Interns are exposed to a number of professionals in the insurance industry, ranging from company chief executive officers and agency principals to young professionals just beginning their career and former interns entering the workforce. Morehart maintained her connections with PIA and her program hosts after graduation and offers the same advice to fellow graduates.

"Keep in contact with people who may be able to help you find a position. Let everyone know that you are searching for a job and ask them to keep an ear open wherever they go," Morehart said. "I also would recommend sending out as many personalized cover letters and resumes you can to get your name out there, and to take any interview that is offered because you never know where it may lead."

Although it was a long process, Morehart is thankful to have secured a position—one that met her desired criteria and was suited to her level of experience.

"Many of my peers have had very few leads or offers due to the economy being so weak," Morehart said. "I realize I am pretty lucky and look forward to starting my new job. During the 10-week PIA Internship Program, I learned a lot about working with people through the internship, and I hope to take that with




Alishia Morehart

me as I begin my new position,” Morehart said.

Even if you don’t immediately find the perfect job after graduation, you can use the skills you have learned and the contacts you have made to continue your search for your dream job.

“As I begin my new position, I look forward to having my own workload and responsibilities,” Morehart said. “I am also excited to have a new routine and be done with college classes. Although I feel a little apprehensive about taking on new responsibilities, I know I am able to do the work that is needed and that I can learn as quickly as possible.”

To date, 28 students have completed the Internship Program and many will enter the workforce in the coming months. To learn more about PIA’s PIA Internship Program, or to request resumes of past interns, call PIA’s Communication Team at (800) 555-1742, or visit [www.ohiopia.com](http://www.ohiopia.com). 

Dohrmann is PIA of Ohio’s communication coordinator.



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Ohio Mutual Insurance Group  
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**Michael Floyd**  
Defiance College  
State Auto

**Lisa Hewit**  
Ohio Northern University  
Westfield Group  
Payak-Dubbs Agency

**Kevin Horstman**  
The University of Akron  
The Motorists Insurance Group  
Payne & Brown Insurance Agency Inc.

**Sahar Hosseinarab**  
Bowling Green State University  
Selective Insurance Co. of America  
Brooks & Stafford Co.

**Kurt Kleman**  
Ohio Northern University  
Westfield Group  
Aspen Insurance Associates

**Brian Mulvey**  
The University of Dayton  
The Motorists Insurance Group  
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Grange Mutual Insurance Group  
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Ohio Mutual Insurance Group  
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