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Supportive Strategies for Human Services Online Internships: A Case Study of Guttman Community College's Remote Binary Model

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Abstract

Creating a viable human services internship program at the community college level presents many challenges, from retaining partner agencies willing to supervise, often inexperienced, beginning students, to retaining students willing to overcome personal, academic, and financial challenges to participate in an internship. These challenges were exacerbated by restrictions placed on in-person teaching and internships during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, Guttman Community College's human services program has developed a remote binary internship model that offers fieldwork students the benefits of participating in an internship through online agency-based supervised field placements or class-based asynchronous assignments for fieldwork students that cannot participate synchronously due to pandemic-related challenges. The authors offer a description of a novel approach to internship provision, which was developed to mitigate the pandemic's impact on students completing their internship in human services. This case study provides an analysis of implementation, lessons learned, and recommendations for future research, including evaluation planning. The hope is that this model will offer a roadmap for other human services programs seeking to create robust remote internships that can help students mitigate the challenges of online learning while advancing their training through the field placement internship.

Key terms: Human Services Internships; Field Placement; Online Internships; Community College Human Services; Student Support

Introduction

Internships are becoming an increasingly important component of higher education (Silva et al., 2016). Creating a viable and vibrant internship experience, especially at the community college level, can often present challenges that require careful consideration prior to implementation (DePaola, 2014; Desmond & Stahl, 2011; Lopes et al., 2019). Some of these challenges include identifying partner agencies willing to supervise and mentor associate-level students who are often inexperienced and at the beginning of their college experience, developing internships that meet the needs of community college students to acquire skills beyond routine, mundane, or administrative tasks, and creating an experience that both students and partner agencies find rewarding. Additionally, there is often a lack of internal structures, including administrators, to support the internship process (Lopes et al., 2019). The current shift in many academic institutions to a fully remote platform due to COVID-19 restrictions, presents additional obstacles to student learning and the internship process (Hora, 2020). Access and utilization of the appropriate technological tools can present layers of barriers for students, faculty, staff, and agency supervisors (Means, & Neisler, 2020; McCafferty, 2020).

Responding to this new online environment requires a re-imagining of the internship learning experience for community college students. During the rapid transition to remote learning during the Spring 2020 semester, the authors' college engaged in what is referred to as emergency remote teaching (O'Keefe, et al., 2020, p.7). This type of remote learning occurs when there is a lack of time, resources, and support to develop high-quality and engaging online learning environments (O'Keefe, et al., 2020). When faculty learned that the college would be continuing remote learning in the fall semester, the researchers, along with the program faculty and staff worked to develop a comprehensive redesign of the fieldwork processes, procedures, and fieldwork courses. While online internship-based courses can be successful, mandates such as "proper training of instructors, clear expectations for students, and legally and ethically appropriate technology" need to be explicitly present (Chen, et al., 2020, p. 89). In this remote setting, fieldwork students (FW) can no longer rely on obtaining all of their skills through in-person hands-on learning within an agency setting. They are no longer able to be physically present for supervision meetings, client interactions, case conferences, staff meetings, and in-service trainings, among other agency-based events.

To help fill the gaps created by these drastic shifts in practices, the program faculty and staff have developed and are implementing a binary internship model (class-based versus agency-based) which is bolstered by ancillary support and leadership from a trained team of peers, known as field associates (FA). This article describes the integrated remote internship and peer supervision model and offers insights from the team on the implementation with an entire cohort of FWS. While this remote internship model was developed in response to the unexpected shift to online learning, it may continue to flourish as online education becomes more widely available, even after the end of the pandemic restrictions. The study was exempt from IRB review as it relied on pre-existing data and conceptual observations. There are no ethical concerns to report.

Theoretical Framework

This model is grounded in an integrated theoretical framework first proposed by Hardcastle (1992) in his study of peer supervision, that combines empowerment theory, Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, and expectancy theory (Herzberg, 1966; Rose, 1990; Steele, 1964). The FA' work with FWS is characterized by an amalgamation of peer supervision, mentorship, and academic support which rely on an approach that is rooted in the empowerment

of FA and FWS through dialogue with one another and through the principles of contextualization and collectivity. Contextualization refers to meeting the student where they are at and tailoring the support being offered to the FWS' stated needs, values, and preferences (Rose, 1990). Collectivity encourages the student to join with the FA and with others to reduce isolation and to gain insight into their subjective experience as being common and shared by many. Expectancy theory helps the program's faculty and staff to understand how the expectations of FA to achieve their own professional and academic goals through their participation in the work, enables them to overcome the challenges of working remotely and making contact with FWS whom they have never met (Steele, 1964). The two-factor theory of motivation suggests that there are particular job characteristics (motivators) that encourage strong performance and satisfaction, while other characteristics (hygiene factors) prevent dissatisfaction in work settings (Herzberg, 1966; Steele, 1964). For FA, positive connections with FWS, professional skill development and personal growth, are motivators. Hygiene factors include individual and group supervision from a skilled clinician, credit towards graduation, and resume enhancing credentials (Herzberg, 1966). This integrated framework helps the program's faculty and staff to understand the subjective experiences of the FWS and FA as they engage with the internship and illustrates the complexity of characterizing a micro and mezzo-level dynamic relationship between individuals and between individuals and institutions (i.e., academic and agency-based).

Binary Internship Model

This model was developed in response to the crisis precipitated by the pandemic which compelled all educational programs and services to pivot to an online format. It is experimental in its inception, and support for its effectiveness is forthcoming in a future manuscript that outlines the results of its evaluation. This case study is based upon a human services program in Guttman Community College, a college within the City University of New York. The majority of the human services students are enrolled full-time (85%), are female (75%), and are primarily first generation college students of traditional college age (ages 18-22). The demographics of the students in the program are representative of the college's overall demographics in which the majority of students identify as Hispanic and reside in New York City. The COVID-19 pandemic required a complete transformation to online learning for the entire college beginning in the Spring 2020 semester. However, in staying in alignment with the Council for Standards in Human Services Education standards, completing the equivalent of 250 hours of internship work over the course of their second year remained a requirement to graduate with a major in human services (Council for Standards in Human Services Education, 2020). When the decision was made that faculty would be teaching in a remote learning environment until further notice, the human services program elected to leverage the longstanding and nascent partnerships with agencies that host FWS for internships. There are approximately 55 agencies with whom the program is currently engaged. Program faculty and staff created a remote internship job description for the agencies that detailed FWS' and agencies' roles, responsibilities, and expectations. The job description for this option is as follows:

A full semester remote internship is one where the intern works remotely with an agency that offers them an ongoing human services internship with a clear job description, specific tasks, and weekly timeframes. A full semester remote internship resembles a standard in-person internship, only the intern works virtually. Full semester remote internships will last the entire semester and will require that the intern work 10 to 10.5 hours per week for 12 weeks earning 125 hours/semester. Interns must receive a

minimum of one hour of face-to-face supervision per week and additional support as needed.

Twenty four (24) agencies agreed to host a student for a remote field placement internship (agency-based). Alternatively, the program created an internship based on curated assignments assembled by the human services faculty to serve those FWS who were not placed/matched with an agency (class-based). This is described below:

In the classroom-based model, faculty assign students with innovative experiential opportunities that allow for practice and reflection of theories learned in the classroom. A classroom-based intern must complete all assigned learning opportunities to earn an equivalent of the required 125 credits of field hours. An intern may for example, be assigned to practice biopsychosocial skills, create service plans, draft progress notes, or complete process recordings, (as per course syllabus) and documentation of such, by interviewing individuals they know personally. They may be assigned to view a particular film and then analyze the main characters from a particular theoretical approach, or they may attend webinars and online trainings for human services professionals.

In the class-based internship, weekly assignments are completed by FWS that meet the hours requirement and learning outcomes of the internship as closely as possible. Assignments are focused on skills, ethics, policies, intervention strategies, cultural awareness and advocacy. FWS are asked to write reflections, research reports, and/or critical analyses to demonstrate their learning.

FWS were invited to self-select either the agency-based or the class-based internship. Given the challenges presented by the pandemic for FWS in terms of mental health, financial issues, technical access (i.e., Wi-Fi and computers), and scheduling their remote work time often while working or caring for family members, the program believes that allowing the FWS to choose was the only ethically sound approach. While 15 out of 55 FWS (27%) selected the class-based internship, most FWS opted for the agency-based internship.

Field Associates

Despite offering two remote options that fulfill the internship requirement, the authors are keenly aware that meeting the learning outcomes of an in-person internship experience presents an obstacle (Chen et al., 2020). Likewise, given past experiences, over the spring 2020 and summer semesters, as a community college, with the overwhelming demands of remote learning on faculty and FWS, it was anticipated that engaging consistently with FWS and with agency supervisors would be a challenge.

In order to supplement the asynchronous coursework and the internship component of the field placement program, program faculty and staff have recruited and trained an ancillary support team of Field Associates (FA) to serve as liaisons, mentors, classroom assistants, and peer supervisors to FWS. Developing opportunities for peers to support student learning is not a new idea (Bosselait & Maier, 2019). FA are advanced bachelor's level (BSW) and master's level (MSW) social work students who are themselves completing a field placement internship. Through partnerships with several local college's social work field placement offices, the program has offered the role of FA to a select group of students to fulfill their internship

requirement¹. See Figure 1 for an overview of the binary internship model. The program currently has six FA working with students. The FA are similar in keyways to FWS (e.g., demographics, career aspirations) which makes them credible, and they are further along in their training, therefore able to provide meaningful support and peer supervision. Key personal characteristics of FA should be “passion, enthusiasm, and ownership regarding their work” as well as demonstrating responsibility and being able to work independently (Bosselait & Maier, 2019, p.6). An example job description for FA is below:

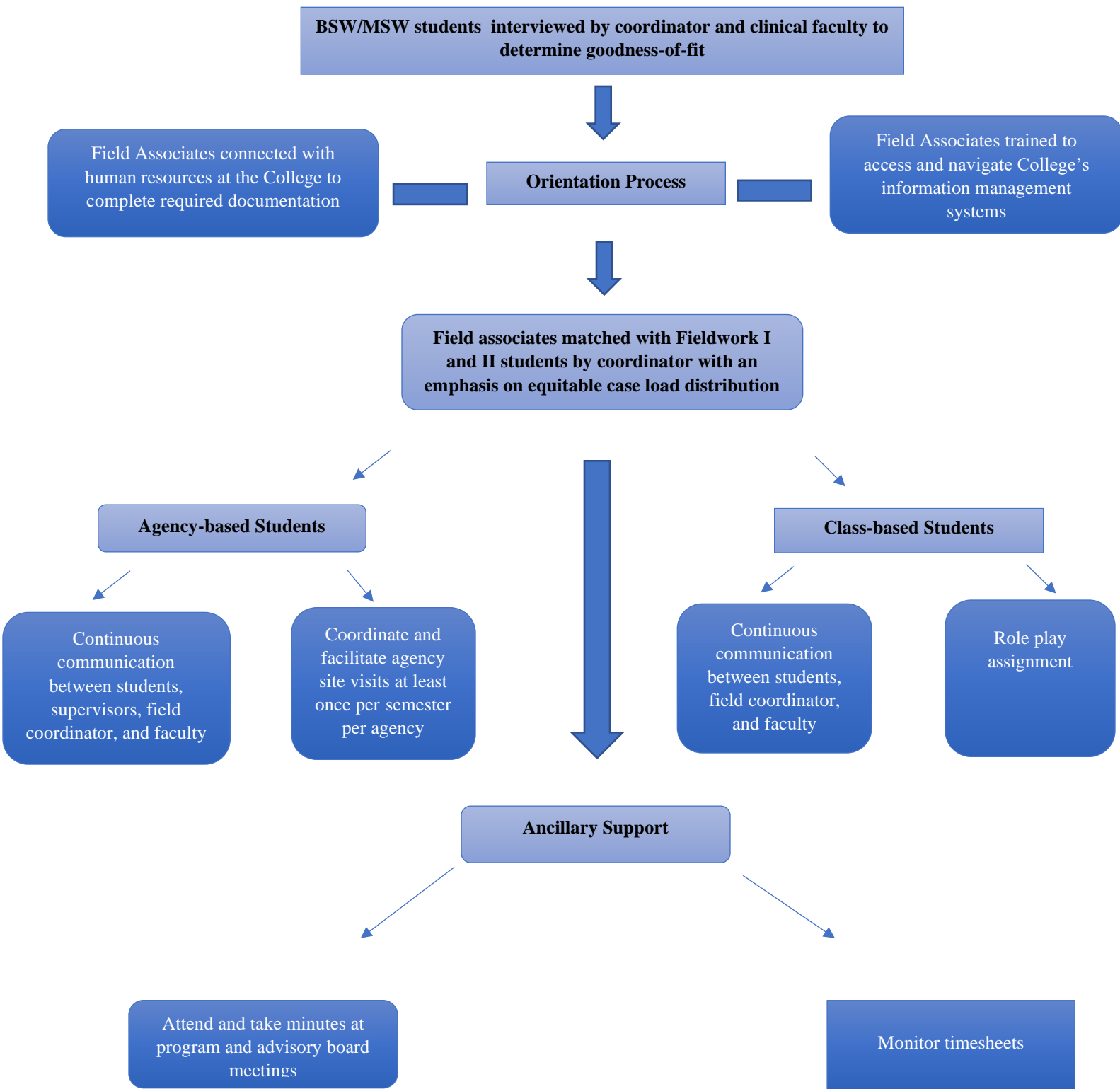
- Provide individual and/or small group peer mentoring weekly for students identified as needing additional support with life and study skills (i.e. assistance with writing, managing stress problem solving, communicating on the internship etc.).
- Conduct intakes and assessment for the Guttman Office of Accessibility. Participate in tabling and outreach at Guttman student events and assist in the planning of larger college events such as the Human Services Fieldwork Recognition Event.
- Participate in human service team meetings, Guttman staff meetings, supervisory trainings, staff trainings and professional development events.
- Analysis of student end-of-year field evaluation (creating a report for staff).
- Schedule and co-conduct interview appointments with new FWS for matching to prospective internships.

Prospective FA must complete an interview with their own field placement coordinator (FC) and a clinical professor in the program who both serve as supervisors for the interns. This interview usually takes place mid-summer in preparation for the fall semester. Before the semester starts, FA are placed in contact with the college’s human resources office and within two weeks they are provided with essentials such as e-mail addresses, ID cards, and access to the systems such as the human services program’s email and Zoom accounts, Blackboard, SharePoint, and Starfish (student performance management system). FA are trained to use these platforms with support from information technology department.

¹ It is important to note that in order to have the capacity to offer our program as a site for the field associates to meet their internship requirement, we must provide a SIFI-credentialed supervisor and sign an agreement with the student’s home institution to provide supervision according to their policies.

Figure 1

Binary Internship Model



The field placement office matches FWS with FA. Matching takes place at the level of the student, rather than by class. This ensures that some FWS who are placed at the same agency-based internship, also share the same FA. This reduces duplication of services and optimizes the use of FA's time. FA are first introduced to the FWS by a general announcement sent out/posted by the Fieldwork I and II course instructors (faculty). This announcement informs the FWS of the forthcoming outreach they will be receiving directly from the FA.

The faculty work with FA to develop communication skills through dialogue with agency supervisors around critical FWS issues. FA coordinate and facilitate agency site visits at least once per semester, per agency. To successfully meet the unique challenges presented by the pandemic and remote working conditions, FA are trained to exhibit an exceptionally high level of sensitivity, flexibility, and openness. Engaging with FWS may require multiple attempts through phone and email, and because the FA are working remotely, they must be persistent and take initiative to prioritize outreach. Whereas, in pre-pandemic times, FA acclimated gradually, were mentored by faculty in person, and could visit their FWS' classes in person to introduce themselves, in the current climate, these practices are replaced by increased workloads, accelerated timelines, and remote contact. FA are urged to practice self-care and to advocate for themselves when they are feeling overly burdened.

Ancillary Support

In this section, the ancillary support offered by the FA to the human services program in general, with an emphasis on support for the binary remote internship will be described.

Support for the Human Services Program

FA are an integral part of the human services program. They are liaisons to the agencies, maintaining partnerships, trouble-shooting, providing information about deadlines, course requirements, academic schedules, and sharing resources. Student support, especially during this time of uncertainty, is crucial (Means & Neisler, 2020). FA are encouraged to attend human services program and advisory board meetings and to take meeting minutes, helping to build their own skills of documentation and recording. They also become an active part of the annual supervisory meeting participating in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the event.

Support for the Binary Remote Internship

As previously mentioned, the FA serve as liaisons between the agency supervisors, the FC, and the FWS. Each FA is assigned a caseload of eight to ten FWS. They check-in with their assigned FWS weekly and check-in with agency supervisors to address any concerns. FA also monitor time sheet submissions and assist the FC with site visits. In addition, FA offer to assist FWS with academic work, peer support around learning remotely, help with stress management, self-care, time management, and provide peer supervision with regard to their internship. They can also answer questions about academic and career trajectories for social work by sharing their own experiences in their BSW or MSW programs.

FA work individually with their FWS on one specific classroom assignment, called the role play. For this assignment, the FA arranges a time to meet with the FWS via videoconferencing or telephone. During the role play, the FWS and the FA alternate taking on the role of the client and the worker (e.g., counselor, social worker). To prepare for the role play, the "client" provides a summary of the character they will be playing. For example, they may offer the client's age, background, and reason for seeking help.

FWS and FA are encouraged to show any emotions that fit their character's situation, and to be as authentic as possible to make the encounter more realistic and offer the chance to practice skills. The role of the worker is to introduce him/herself, engage with the client,

establish rapport, and demonstrate empathy and skills of active listening. This assignment was designed to help fill the gap of not having in person opportunities to role play in class with their peers, and for some FWS, not having opportunities to meet with a client. Engaging in role playing experiences provided FWS the opportunity to strengthen their interpersonal professional skills. Role playing recordings are submitted to the course instructor for a grade. This assignment will be completed twice, once in the middle, and once at the end of the semester.

Initial Impressions

As this is the first semester that the program has implemented this model, a comprehensive formative or outcome evaluation has not been completed. Therefore, the authors offer their initial impressions as a preliminary assessment of the model's roll-out. The onboarding process for the FA began approximately two weeks prior to the beginning of classes. This was key to the program's ability to meet the goal of matching FWS within the first two weeks of the academic year, after which no more students would be added to the courses. This semester the program enlisted the help of the information technology department approximately three weeks before the start of the semester to provide FA access to course materials, email, Starfish (early alert and student success software system), and the College's systems and networks. The program also needed to ensure that FA had the necessary resources to work remotely and to navigate the same online space as FWS.

To illustrate the experiences of the stakeholders of this initiative, the following are quotes from faculty members, field placement office, and the FA themselves. The clinical professor who supervises the FA shared five points on her view of the FA's role in the remote learning environment:

1. FA provide extra support/mentoring to our students.
2. FA can identify with the dual learning process and guide our students in terms of developing skill sets, different perspectives about being an intern.
3. Our students get to see role models from their community.
4. Our students have the opportunity to speak with the FA about the BSW/MSW educational process.
5. They also help the program faculty and staff to monitor our agency/organizations that we partner with, via assessment and site visits (now virtually).

The field coordinator (FC) stated the following about her experience with the FA so far.

Overall it is a pleasure to work with our social work FA. They bring a layer of additional support and insight to our program. For me personally, it is also an important aspect of training our future social work leaders in a world that increasingly needs their talents. Nonetheless, the work can also be challenging. It is time intensive/consuming to train and guide our FA. Some of them pick up the work quickly, while others take much more time. Despite this, I think partnering with schools of social work to train FA should always be part of our team structure.

One of the bachelor's-level FA who began her internship with us this fall commented:

As a field associate, I hope to get more experience as a leader. Being a field associate has been helping me to work not only with the interns but with different agencies as well. Being in the professional world is not easy. As a field associate, I have the opportunity to be in the professional world, but at the same time, during this period, it is okay to make mistakes and ask questions. As for the students, I learned students usually look up to

older college students, especially when they are being introduced as their leaders. As a field associate, I give the students an extra layer of support. As a student myself, I understand what they are going through, especially with everything being virtual. So, I feel like I make it easy for the students to open up to me about whatever is going on with them, whether it is personal or educational. What I hope to attain from the field associate role is experience. Being a social worker in practice, any experience is valid to be able to help every aspect of the community as much as possible. Although this only deals with college students for right now, this experience could possibly aid me in helping another population because social work is universal. I feel that my role as a field associate brings support, and hopefully comfort to the students that they are not alone, and that we are in this together; there is no differentiation between us.

FWS shared that they find working with the FA to be beneficial. One student referred to her field associate as a “great source of support for the students. It is kind of like having an experienced friend.” The following are examples from two FWS on how they are experiencing the internship and the support from FA.

My experience being an intern at Agency X has been nothing but great. I picked up a lot of new skills and improved on some of my own. Everyone at my internship is so welcoming and super helpful. I really love how they actually do what they say they do which is to provide opportunities to children of New York cities underserved communities and I love talking/listening to clients really makes my day. When I first started my internship, I felt very overwhelmed because I work, do all my assignments for school, and on top of that just deal with life. I really wanted to change to a classroom-based internship because I really didn't think I will be able to handle it and that it was too much for me but then I spoke to a field associate she gave me some advice, which took some of my worries away and made me stay at my internship.

My experience in my remote internship has been good. Although it is very different from what I had planned, it has made a very good experience. I have had the opportunity to have communication with some clients by telephone to do wellness checks and see if there is anything they need that we can help you with. My supervisor has been very understandable, she is always there to answer any questions or explain any concern I have regarding my tasks or in general. She is always very clear and direct with everything that I have to do. My field associate has been there to make sure everything is okay. She calls me to ask how I am and how my internship is going and if I have any questions or concerns that she can clarify. So far everything is going well with my internship. I appreciate how open and understandable my supervisor is with the remote internship because this is new to us as interns and to them as supervisors as well: also how my field associate is always checking up on me making sure everything is going well.

The quotes above highlight the strong interpersonal bonds that have been established between FA and FWS. The facility with which FA have been able to build rapport despite being at a distance is a testament to their personal styles and their relatability. FA reflected on the very fact that they mirror the students in many ways and that FWS look up to them as role models. Similarly, FA gained valuable professional experience by conducting outreach, offering emotional and academic support, while providing peer supervision for FWS' internships. FA

broadened their skill sets through their interactions with agency staff and supervisors, a valuable networking opportunity for soon-to-be graduates.

Nonetheless, the quotes also highlighted the difficulties of onboarding and supervising FA in a virtual space. The differences in learning styles and abilities among FA created unpredictable challenges in using technology to communicate with FWS, document student activities, and monitor progress. Despite these concerns, faculty found merit in the support that FA offered to the program. They were described as being the “eyes and ears” for the program, providing information on any potential problems before they became severe.

Initial Challenges

Incorporating FA into a human services undergraduate program is complex. FA arrive with different competencies, experiences, and skills. Similar to the FWS, they may be facing a multitude of challenges in their personal lives, especially during the current crisis. They may struggle to balance work, internship, academic, and family responsibilities. New FA need to be trained on protocols, procedures, and gain familiarity with college systems. They require weekly supervision, both individual and group, in addition to timesheet management and mid-year and end of year evaluations. Supervisors also review and provide feedback on the FA’ process recordings throughout the semester. It can be overly time consuming when FA struggle with using technology or with their written and/or oral communication skills. The FC stated the following:

Even for the most capable intern, it usually takes one full semester for them to be fully acclimated to the work. There is a lot of training that goes into preparing a Field Associate. It is a big investment of time, supervision and shadowing. The “return on our investment” will at best be for one semester. After that the intern leaves and we get a new batch of interns/FA, the training process begins all over again.

This level of supervision and management requires approximately eight or more hours per week to conduct individual and group supervision, provide guidance and support with task prioritization and management, and importantly, technical support. As with many remote internships, the faculty and staff struggle with acclimating FA to the culture of the program and the college (Hora, 2020). Faculty program and staff are trying to combat this challenge through encouraging FA to attend monthly program meetings, college and program sponsored events, and participating in weekly supervisory sessions. Even with these noted challenges, the incorporation of FA is a critical component of the program. While FA play an important role in the program design, it is important to note that they should not be looked upon as replacements for staff.

Preliminary Lessons Learned

At the time this is being written, it is almost at the end of the fall semester. While a comprehensive evaluation is being conducted at the end of the academic year, the following are some lessons learned from the process of implementing the model.

Field Associate Barriers

Preparedness to Use Technology. FA arrived with varying degrees of experience, readiness, and self-efficacy with using technology. Difficulties included sending emails, utilizing Starfish, Blackboard, arranging, and recording video-conference meetings. The need for these essential skills in a remote setting exacerbated challenges and prevented tasks from being completed in a timely fashion. Training and technical support for all FA should be continuous and ongoing from the beginning, and throughout the semester. Emphasis should be placed on

assessment of technical skills during the onboarding of FA. Transparency and open communication should be encouraged explicitly with regard to feelings of ambivalence, frustration or confusion about using technology. FA's initial reluctance to disclose obstacles resulted in lost time and avoidable misunderstandings with faculty.

Work-life Balance in a Remote Environment. The FA, as students themselves, are facing struggles balancing their internships, schoolwork, and personal responsibilities. Work-life balance has been impacted by the pandemic due to blurring of the boundaries between work and home environments. Those who live in less-than-optimal conditions, lacking privacy, quiet, or Wi-Fi access, and/or have significant paid work or caregiving duties, experience increased demands to navigate those spaces in times of work, leisure, caregiving, and rest. This has led to some of the FA struggling to complete their tasks. Faculty must engage FA in open dialogue about these personal matters in the context of individual supervision to maintain confidentiality and develop trust. Should these discussions reveal unmet needs for mental health support or other needs, appropriate referrals should be made and workloads adjusted until stability is achieved.

Field Associate Strengths

Supporting One Another as Peers. FA have established routine communication and meet regularly without faculty. This provided a safe space to share concerns about interactions with FWS, faculty, and workload difficulties. Meetings offer a place to develop strategies and build courage to address difficult issues.

Strong Etiquette Skills. FA, in general, demonstrated polite and professional etiquette through email and oral communication. Their facility with professional and social manners made interactions pleasant, productive and welcomed by faculty, FWS, and agencies.

Positive Attitude and Willingness to Accept Feedback. FA were offered feedback from multiple sources including program faculty and staff. This can be challenging for many novice professionals, particularly during times of stress. In spite of the circumstances, and the multiple sources of critical feedback, FA maintained a positive attitude, willingness to listen, and willingness to respond to suggestions and recommendations.

Forthcoming Evaluation

To establish the effectiveness of this binary remote internship model in meeting the learning outcomes of the program, an evaluation plan has been developed to examine the process of implementation and the FWS' outcomes. The evaluation consists of the following assessments: a midterm (mid-semester) and final (end-of-semester) student-driven self-assessment completed by each student collaboratively with their supervisors for agency-based internships (see Appendix A for the self-assessment), a course satisfaction survey from FWS and agency supervisors (see Appendix B for the satisfaction surveys), student grade distributions, proportion of assignments completed, and a measure of student engagement with the course (proportion of FWS attending online office hours and/or speaking to professors by phone/video-conferencing). Below, each assessment is described in detail.

Midterm and Final Evaluations

Evaluation will be completed by the FWS and their supervisors for agency-based internships, both mid-semester and at the end of the semester. The evaluations consists of 10 questions, for which FWS rate themselves in areas such as communication skills, professionalism, and cultural competency. Subsequently, supervisors review the evaluations and identify discrepancies and expand on FWS answers as needed. This evaluation also asks FWS to

identify three professional or personal goals that they are working on for the midterm evaluation, and to evaluate the progression towards these goals on the final evaluation.

Satisfaction Questions

Both the agency supervisors and fieldwork FWS were asked to complete a satisfaction survey midway through the semester including the strengths, identified challenges, and suggestions for improving the remote internship process. Responses will be analyzed and common themes identified.

Student Engagement

The program will assess FWS engagement by looking at the proportion of assignments completed in both Fieldwork I and Fieldwork II courses, as well as the proportion of FWS attending online office hours and speaking to professors by phone or video-conferencing. This information will be collected through the instructors' analysis of their gradebooks and participation records.

Grade Distribution

The grade distributions for the Fieldwork I and Fieldwork II courses will be analyzed through the College's visual analytics platform. These findings will also be compared to grade distributions from Fall 2019 and Fall 2018.

Four out of the six FA will be continuing their internships through the spring semester. The authors anticipate that the results of the evaluation will identify ways that the human services program can better support FA in a remote environment and ways that the FA can better support the FWS in a remote environment. The findings will be instrumental in the onboarding process of new FA. It is the authors' hope that these findings will not only strengthen program design, but provide college faculty, fieldwork coordinators, and administration valid recommendations on how components of the internship model can be implemented into their own existing fieldwork programs.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Data for the study was collected during a time of upheaval, transition, and instability in the college and among the participants, all of whom were coping with the effects of the pandemic. Therefore, findings and observations are to be interpreted with caution as the pandemic comes to an end and online internships, in-person internships and class-based internships become more routine and less fraught. Secondly, while remote internships offer a plethora of learning experiences, they are not identical to the learning richness that comes from live in-person interactions with clients and colleagues, nor are they substitutes for the depth of understanding that comes from navigating organizational culture and professional social norms. This study does not address how missing these aspects may impact students' skills development. However, the authors believe that because the students are at the very beginning of their training, that they will advance in their senior colleges, and many will go on to earn master's degrees in social work and in related helping professions, giving them ample opportunities to further expand and refine their practice skills in a variety of settings through additional internships, mentorship, and trainings. Students who acquire entry-level positions upon graduation from the program will likely receive supervision, support, and training to be able to manage their job duties satisfactorily. Lastly, while the development and implementation of the model is reported in this paper, data on student outcomes has not been analyzed. Future research will illustrate how this model impacted student performance in coursework, student performance in their internships, and student satisfaction.

Conclusion

Maintaining a robust human services internship program at the community college level requires a commitment to, and investment in providing student support through a variety of channels. Peer supervision, professional supervision and mentorship, faculty support, and program-level structural support must all be leveraged concurrently to manage the needs of FWS, particularly during the pandemic. This case study highlights the critical role of these supports, in particular the FA to provide an additional safety net for the FWS. Outcomes of the model are forthcoming as the evaluation period begins and while the program anticipates some adjustments, based on lessons learned, preliminary indicators suggest that FWS and agency partners are benefiting. While this internship structure does not come without challenges, it is the authors' hope that sharing this model will provide insight for other internship programs as they navigate the challenges of providing high quality field placement internships through remote platforms.

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Please rate your performance in the areas listed below	Emerging	Progressing	Proficient	Mastering
Displays understanding of how services are delivered				
Utilizes skills for beginning competence (active listening, interviewing)				
Demonstrates caring, empathy, respect, and genuineness when interacting with clients, colleagues and peers.				
Demonstrates a professional attitude.				
Demonstrates conscientiousness and willingness to complete tasks and take on new challenges.				
Demonstrates sensitivity to and awareness of diversity when interacting with clients and colleagues.				
Demonstrates knowledge about clients' cultures, communities, and histories.				
Protects privacy and confidentiality and is aware of implications of HIPAA.				

<p>Communicates in a professional manner/tone with clients, supervisor and colleagues (and professor).</p>				
<p>Is willing to ask questions and ask for help.</p>				

Supervisor comments (please note any discrepancies between your assessment and the student's, below).

Question for Midterm Evaluation: Please list three goals that you are currently working on in your placement.

These goals can be related to 1) your skills with client interaction; 2) organization/time management; 3) technology/software; 4) documentation, or 5) your own personal emotional or professional growth related the human services profession.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Question for Final Evaluation: Please list the three goals from the Midterm Evaluation that you have been working on in your placement. For each goal assess your progress using the same criteria as above: Emerging, Progressing, Proficient, Mastering.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student's Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Supervisor's Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix B

Satisfaction Survey Questions

Supervisor Questions

Oral Communication

1. How often does your intern practice oral communication skills by phone, video conferencing, or other virtual platforms with clients, family/friends, community representatives, etc.?
2. How well is your intern effectively articulating thoughts and ideas (both written and orally) to persons inside and outside the organization?

Team Building

3. How often does your intern engage in tasks that require them to work together with agency colleagues, supervisors, and others such as volunteers, etc.?
4. How well does your intern demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to individuals representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and points of view?

Critical Thinking

5. How often does your intern actively analyze situations, make decisions, and problem-solving concerns that arise at the agency?
6. How well does your intern analyze situations, make decisions, and engage in problem-solving concerns that arise at the agency?

Digital Technology

7. To what extent does your intern work with current and emerging digital technology (e.g., online tools, social media, video conferencing, etc.)?
8. How comfortable is your intern working with current and emerging digital technology (e.g., online tools, social media, video conferencing, etc.)?
9. To date, what has been the most valuable aspect of working with Guttman Human Services interns?
10. To date, what has been the greatest challenge of working with Guttman Human Services interns?
11. What recommendations do you have for Guttman to improve the remote internship process?
12. What recommendations do you have for the interns?

Intern Questions**Oral Communication**

1. To what extent in your internship do you practice oral communication skills by phone, video conferencing, or other virtual platforms with clients, family/friends, community representatives, your fieldwork professor, or field associate?
2. To what extent in your classroom-based internship do you practice oral communication skills by phone, video conferencing, or other virtual platforms with your fieldwork professor, field associate, or community representatives?

Team Building

3. How often in your internship do your tasks require that you work together with agency colleagues, supervisors, and others such as volunteers, etc.?
4. To what extent in your classroom-based internship do you engage in collaborative working relationships with others, including classmates, faculty, field associates, etc.?

Critical Thinking

5. How often do you encounter circumstances in your agency-based internship that push you to work through details of a problem to reach a solution in your agency?
6. How often do you encounter circumstances in your class-based internship that push you to work through details of a problem to reach a solution?

Digital Technology

7. To what extent in your agency-based internship are you comfortable working with current and emerging digital technology (e.g., online tools, social media, video conferencing, etc.)?
8. To what extent in your classroom-based internship are you comfortable working with current and emerging digital technology (e.g., online tools, social media, video conferencing, etc.)?
9. To date, what has been the most valuable aspect of your remote internship (For both agency-based and classroom-based?)
10. To date, what has been the greatest challenge of your remote internship?
11. What recommendations do you have for Guttman to improve the remote learning experience?
12. What recommendations do you have for your agency to improve the remote learning experience? (Answer if you are in an agency-based internship.)