



In 2011 an evaluation was conducted to measure the effects of experiential learning activities coordinated by the IUPUI Solution Center (class projects, research projects, internships, community-based projects, and independent study) on:

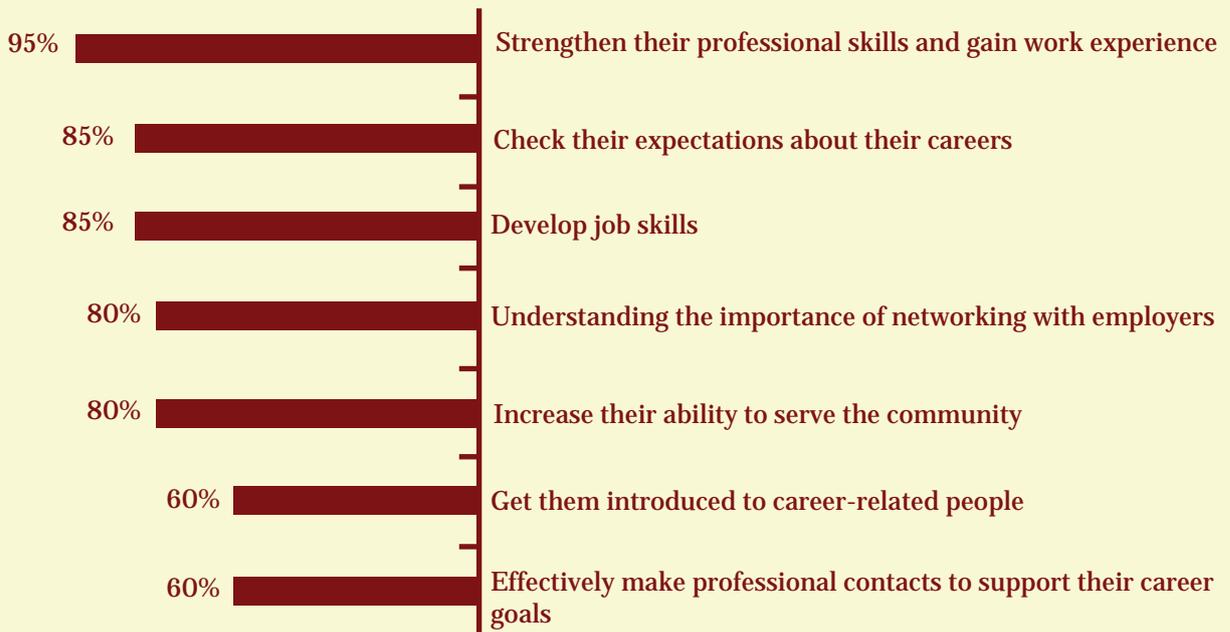
- 1 IUPUI students' academic and future career development,
- 2 IUPUI faculty members' opportunities for networking and collaboration, and
- 3 Community partners' organizational capacities and productivity.

The evaluation design was Mixed Sequential Explanatory (Creswell, 2008), combining the collection and analysis of quantitative data with the collection and analysis of qualitative data, and triangulating data. Data collection techniques were online surveys and focus groups. Results are based on the perceptions of change reported by the respondents.

Students

Career Development

Students expressed that having participated in the experience was useful to:



Finding a job

16% said to have been offered a job at the organization where they interned, and 19% said they had been offered a job at another organization.

Employability

- Students believed that after the experience they are better prepared for a job (80.6%), and that they can get a good job reference (76.7%).
- 64.2% of community partners where students did their projects or internships agreed that they would be more likely to hire applicants who have internship experience
- 80.4% responded that they agreed that internship experience was desirable in a new graduate resume.

Faculty members believe that participation in these experiences might:

- Strengthen connections with community organizations
- Enable them to meet other IUPUI faculty members
- Increase their community awareness
- Add value to their academic productivity
- Positively affect their teaching

However, collaboration with peers is not directly affected by their participation in projects with the Solution Center.



Community Development

- Community partners agree that getting involved in these experiences serves them to better meet their goals (91.8%).
- 77% think that interns bring a creative perspective to their organization.
- 73% believe that these experiences improve the organization's productivity.



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1** Results are consistent with previous studies about the impact that community-based research projects and internships are expected to have on students' cognitive, academic, civic and career development.
- 2** Results were also consistent with previous studies about how these experiences open opportunities:
 - For faculty members, to build relationships with external agencies;
 - For community partners, to access useful information, build networks, and bring new perspectives into their organizations, promoting organizational development and the creation of new products and services.
- 3** The mixed methodology used for gathering data was helpful to:
 - Identify intended, as well as unintended, indirect, and intangible effects.
 - Identify best practices and areas for improvement.
 - Make respondents reflect about the benefits of the experience.
- 4** Further evaluation should lead to development of new models for evaluating student learning outcomes for experiential learning, and partner with peer institutions to assess the impact of student internship on urban and metropolitan areas.



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