



Thursday, May 13, 2004

## Student learns new skills at DaimlerChrysler internship

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Katie Gibson has a head start on a successful professional career thanks to an internship obtained through Oakland University's **English Department**. Gibson, a senior English major, developed her communications and business writing skills by performing community relations functions in DaimlerChrysler Corporation's Civic and Community Relations Department.

"I've had such a blast," said Gibson, whose internship began in January and ended May 13. "Part of our corporate responsibility is to remain active in the community by hosting dinners and conferences and sponsoring charity events. I think the best part for me has been attending a few local fund-raising events and meeting different people. I've also met a lot of people from all across Chrysler and learned different perspectives of the corporate world."

In addition to helping her supervisors plan and organize events, Gibson wrote memos and formal letters and was a copy editor and writer for her department newsletter, "Good Neighbor, Good Citizen." Her final project was to create a Civic and Community Relations intranet Web site for DaimlerChrysler employees.

"I have some experience designing Web sites on my own," said Gibson, who designed the site for **Sigma Tau Delta**, the English honor society. "I just started teaching myself by creating silly sites for a friend. I've also built my own computer and work at Micro Center in Madison Heights, so I was put in charge of building our department Web site. It provides information on our employees and the different organizations our department sponsors. It also includes a lot of links and recent newsletters in a pdf format. My internship was to be over at the end of the winter semester, but I asked to stay on to finish the site. We just launched it last week."

Though Gibson was the only English major among the department interns, she was able to apply many of her skills and learn new ones.

"My writing background definitely helped in working on the newsletters," Gibson said. "It's amazing how many people forget how important it is to communicate through writing. In working on memos and other formal letters, I was amazed at the poor quality of the writing I saw. I do wish I had taken a business writing course prior to the internship. I really had to change my style of communicating and learned a lot about how to communicate more effectively in the business environment."

Gibson was unable to work as many hours at Micro Center because of the internship, which was unpaid, but the experience she gained made it very worthwhile.

"I would suggest to other students that if an internship opportunity comes up, take it, even if it's unpaid," Gibson said. "It took time away from my regular job, so I was making less money, but the experience is definitely worth it. An internship is one more thing you can put on a resume."

Gibson will graduate next December. Thereafter, she plans on pursuing a career in marketing.

Internships for credit are available to English majors with companies and organizations such as the Troy Museum and Historic Village, **Paint Creek Center for the Arts**, **Kresge Library**, **The Oakland Press**, and others. A paid stipend also is available for interns with **Regnery Publishing Inc.**, based in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit the **Sigma Tau Delta** Web site and click "Opportunities," or contact Assistant Professor of English Annie Gilson at (248) 370-2262 or [gilson@oakland.edu](mailto:gilson@oakland.edu).

### SUMMARY

Katie Gibson has a head start on a successful professional career thanks to an internship obtained through Oakland University's English Department. Gibson, a senior English major, developed her communications and business writing skills by performing community relations functions in DaimlerChrysler Corporation's Civic and Community Relations Department.

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