Data Sources

Baccalaureate and Beyond Survey (2016-2017)
• Nationally representative survey of bachelor’s degree recipients, n=19,490.

Strada-College Pulse Survey (December 2021)
• Nationally representative survey of current college students at four-year institutions, n=3,542.

Strada-Gallup Education Survey (September-November 2021)
• Nationally representative survey of adults aged 18-65, n=9,028.
Predicted boost in one year post-graduation earnings associated with having a paid internship, controlling for gender, race/ethnicity, and field of study.

Satisfaction
Work-based learning is associated with higher income, career satisfaction, and value perceptions

Bachelor’s degree recipients

- Annual personal income: $13,859
- Career Satisfaction: +7 percentage points
- Education was worth the cost: +11 percentage points
- Education helped me to achieve my goals: +7 percentage points

Source: Strada-Gallup Education Survey (September-November 2021). Base: bachelor’s degree completers, n=1,941. Alumni matched on race/ethnicity, gender, age, and field of study. For analysis of income differences, cost of living by state of residence was also included.
Confidence
Students who have had paid internships feel more confident and knowledgeable about career opportunities

Source: Strada-College Pulse Survey (December 2021), n=3,542.
Students who have had paid internships see higher value in their education

Likely to recommend school
Education will be worth the cost
Education will help me achieve my goals

- Paid internship
- Unpaid internship
- No internship
- Job related to field of study

Source: Strada-College Pulse Survey (December 2021), n=3,542.
Access
Less than one-third of bachelor’s degree recipients report having had a paid internship as an undergraduate.

Participation in Work-Based Learning

- Paid internship: 29%
- Unpaid internship: 31%
- Co-operative experience: 10%
- Practicum: 15%

White men are most likely to have had a paid internship

Participation in Paid Internships

- Asian: Male 32% Female 33%
- Black: Male 20% Female 21%
- Latino: Male 29% Female 21%
- White: Male 37% Female 25%

Low-income and first-generation students are less likely to have had a paid internship

Participation in Paid Internships

- Pell recipient: 24%
- Not Pell recipient: 31%
- First gen: 22%
- Continuing gen: 32%

Participation in paid internships varies widely by major

Participation in Paid Internship During Undergraduate Education

- Engineering and engineering technology: 56%
- Computer and information sciences: 41%
- Business: 39%
- Biological and physical science, science technology, math, and agriculture: 33%
- Other applied: 28%
- Humanities: 23%
- Social sciences: 22%
- Health care fields: 14%
- General studies and other: 10%
- Education: 10%

After controlling for field of study, access gaps remain

Less likely to have had a paid internship:

- Women: -2 percentage points
- Latino students: -8 percentage points
- Black Students: -13 percentage points

Key Findings

1. **Paid internships are linked to getting paid more after graduation.** College students who completed a paid internship during their undergraduate education have higher-paying first jobs a year after graduation — even when accounting for differences in pay based on field of study, gender, and race/ethnicity. Other work-based learning experiences — unpaid internships, practicums, and cooperative learning — are not associated with an earnings benefit one year after graduation.

2. **Work-based learning is tied to noneconomic post-graduation success.** Bachelor’s degree holders who had a work-based learning experience report greater career satisfaction and are more likely to say their education helped them to achieve their goals and was worth the cost.

3. **Among current students, paid internships are linked with greater confidence they will be successful in the job market and confidence in the value of their education.** Students who have a paid internship report higher levels of knowledge and confidence about their career, feel more supported by their college or university, are more likely to feel their education was worth the cost and helped them to achieve their goals, and are more likely to recommend their college or university to others.

4. **Access to paid internships is uneven.** Students who are Black, Latino, female, low-income or first-generation college students are less likely to experience a paid internship. Even when controlling for variation across majors, these disparities remain.
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