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IMPACT OF PAID INTERNSHIPS FOR MSW STUDENTS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the impact of unpaid internships on graduate students
- Recognize disproportionate burdens on students identifying as women and Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC)
- Review impact of stipends on graduate social work students at West Chester University
- Identify areas for further research

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT



Increase social work and school counseling professionals of diverse backgrounds in the behavioral health workforce for medically underserved and vulnerable populations



Immerse students in integrated care settings and practices



This presentation focuses on the implications of unpaid internships and the impact of 10K stipends for graduate social work students

METHODS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW



Googlescholar,
WCUPA Library



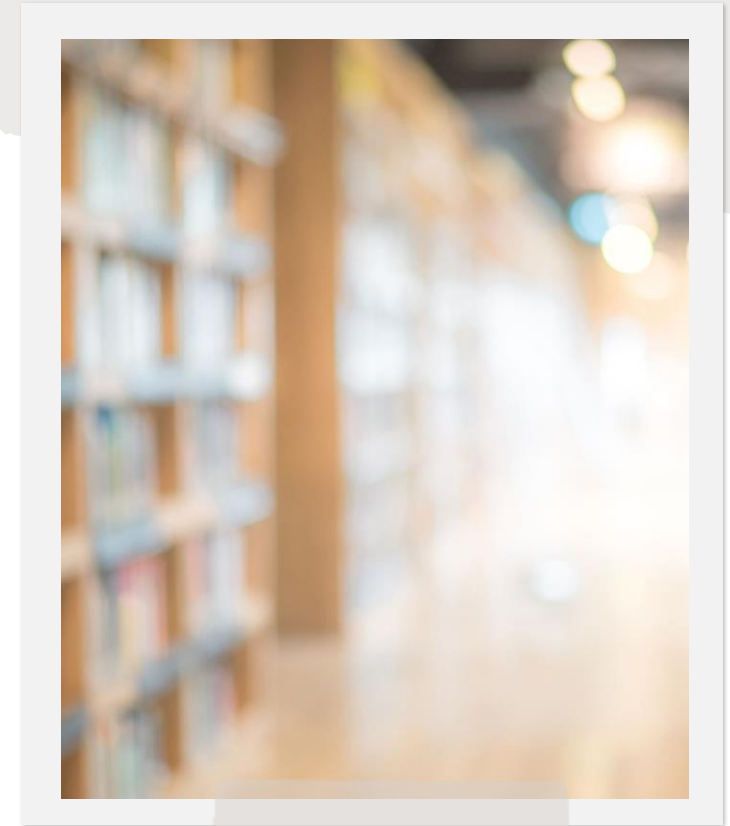
Effects of paid and
unpaid internships



Complicated and
broader implications

UNPAID INTERNSHIPS WERE EXPERIENCED AS:

- Financially stressful
- Reducing quality of life
- Coercive and exploitive
- Disproportionately burdening women and BIPOC



HYPOTHESIS AND METHOD

Hypothesis: Stipends for MSW internships will have a positive impact on student quality of life and reduce financial stress, particularly for women and BIPOC.

Method: Content analysis of alumni perceptions regarding quality of life and attitudes during their final year placement and field instructor perceptions regarding the impact of stipends on students.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS



Increased financial stability, decreased debt



Ability to focus on education



Increased energy and enthusiasm

“

I was afforded the opportunity to quit my job, and pursue MSW full-time, which resulted in me gaining my ideal employment with [a partner field site].

”

-Student Awardee

“

This year [my intern] was able to be a fulltime student and not have a job. Unlike some interns that juggle work, grad school and life, she was able to come to placement with a high energy level and full of enthusiasm for the work. She was able to fully focus on the school work and internship.

”

-Field Instructor

LIMITATIONS
AND
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Limitations: Preliminary data, still need 2 years of data

Future directions: More comprehensive data collection to include different identities and discover further impacts of paid internships

The image features three incandescent light bulbs arranged horizontally on a blue background. The leftmost and middle bulbs are unlit, while the rightmost bulb is brightly lit, casting a glow. The background is split vertically by a jagged, torn-paper-like edge. The left side is blue, and the right side is white.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- Literature shows unpaid internships cause financial stress and exploit students
- Unpaid internships place an undue burden on women and minorities
- Stipends provide financial relief and support quality of life and educational experience
- Structural changes are needed going forward



THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?

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