



Photo Credit: Nick Wallace Photography.

2020 Intern Delaware participants Grace Slate (current CSC employee) and Jonathan Martinez.

## Building and Growing Intern Talent in Delaware

By Jeff Lyons, CSC senior copywriter and PR manager

CSC received more than 1,500 applications for 55 summer internship positions this year—a clear statement that the company’s culture stands out to a large pool of local talent.

“Our internship program started in 2011 as a way to provide summer job opportunities for family members,” says Jen Eichholz, a talent acquisition strategist in CSC’s HR department. “Over the years, the structure has evolved to include professional development opportunities, mentorships, and philanthropic experiences for interns.”

One of those opportunities is [Intern Delaware](#), a nonprofit dedicated to developing Delaware’s future workforce by keeping talent in the state. CSC is one of four founding corporate members of Intern Delaware, which launched in 2019 and now has more than 20 partner corporations.

“Students are moving out of state after they graduate,” explains Scott Malfitano, Intern Delaware board chair and CSC vice president. “Intern Delaware shows young talent that we compete with neighboring states by emphasizing the Delaware experience, the culture, and the accessibility.”

Through a series of educational events, interns have access to a new network of peers while learning from top business leaders and government officials. They gain valuable career path advice, take part in conversations with the governor, and learn about the unique aspects of Delaware culture.

One way Intern Delaware fulfills its mission to retain talent in the state is by creating additional internship openings. “Before we launched, we discovered that companies had resources to hire interns but didn’t know how to build a program,” says Catrina Jefferson, a founding board member and associate product director with CSC. “We formed a committee to create a playbook that would support members who were building new internship programs.”

Jen, who has managed CSC’s intern program since 2014, led the playbook committee and hosted meetings. The playbook really developed into a step-by-step instructional guide for anyone who wants to build or expand an internship program. “When Catrina and I met initially to talk about the playbook, we agreed that it needed to cover everything from gaining buy-in at the start of a program to retaining interns as a source of talent for future hiring,” Jen says. “We wanted to provide a resource for companies looking to get an intern program off the ground.”

Members of the playbook committee also emphasized the importance of tying companies’ intern programs to their diversity and inclusion efforts. “That was a huge theme that came up in conversations,” says Jen. “Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-serving institutions are amazing

sources for underrepresented or underemployed talent. More and more, we’re learning how important diversity, equity, and inclusion are to programs like this. They’re not just items you check off your list—you really have to integrate them into your program.”

Jen notes that a large part of the playbook is based on the CSC interns’ experiences. “We want to create a dynamic experience, not just for the interns, but for our leaders and mentors of the interns. Our program became a model for what an internship program could look like and has developed a reputation locally.”

The key to a strong internship program is continuous improvement and growth. “Every year we look at feedback from our past interns and from leaders of interns and figure out what needs improving,” Jen says. “One year we focused on expanding syllabus activities and things that would enhance the interns’ experience, like a speed networking event or mock interviews. We focused on up-skilling our leaders of interns with tools and resources to deliver a meaningful experience. We want each intern to feel like a part of the team rather than someone doing busywork.”

“One thing that makes our program stand out is our philanthropic project. Each year, we ask our interns to work in small teams to support a charitable cause,” says Jen. At the end of the program, the teams make a presentation to CSC leaders about the charity they supported, how they gave back, and what they learned from the project. “We do this each year and, for many of our interns, it’s the highlight of the program,” she adds.

The program benefits all participants. “The interns get to experience CSC’s unique culture and unlock their full potential while being connected with Delaware’s economy and organizations,” Catrina says. “Employers have the chance to foster young professionals who intend to stay involved in Delaware after graduation.”

In 2021, Intern Delaware became a flagship program of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce’s 501(c)(3) affiliate dedicated to workforce development. “Expanding with the chamber strengthens the value for participating interns,” Scott says. “While CSC is developing the interns professionally, Intern Delaware helps build roots within a statewide network.”



Catrina Jefferson



Jen Eichholz

