

TCAP Students Trade Their Skills for 'Real World' Experience

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(Aug. 8, 2003) Students from the Transportation Career Academy Program (TCAP) recently joined MTA as interns for six weeks of "real world" industry learning and experience.

Fourteen TCAP students are assigned to several divisions and departments that fit their interests, including Ethics, Engineering, Economic and Small Business Diversity; Treasury, Management Audit, Contract Management, Customer Relations, and Revenue Maintenance.

"The TCAP students have made a tremendous difference, particularly to those departments that have multiple projects and programs that need to be rolled out at the same time," says Senior Development and Training Specialist Sally Singleton.

She believes MTA supervisors rely on the TCAP students to assist with day-to-day operations.

"This is exactly what the program was designed to do. The TCAP students are very competent, have excellent computer skills and are professional," Singleton says. "I get tons of requests for TCAP interns"

Becoming an intern at MTA is not easy. Students are selected based on the experience listed in their cover letters and resumes. They also go through an employee-screening process, an interview, drug testing and attend new employee orientation.

TCAP interns perform such tasks as writing reports, field observation, preparing spreadsheets, observing assessment procedures and attending meetings.

Available at five high schools

The TCAP program is sponsored by MTA in cooperation with the Los Angeles and Norwalk/La Mirada Unified School Districts and is available only through John Glenn, Franklin, North Hollywood, Locke and Wilson high schools.

"TCAP provides me with good work experience," Metro Rail Intern Derrick Appelzoller says. "It is helping me get prepared for a career in engineering by teaching me about computers and drafting."

"I like doing architecture projects in the TCAP program. I found out that this is a career field that I would like to go into," Westside Central Intern Jessie Sanchez says. "The program helped me find a career path."

"This is not a program to make students do filing and grunt work," says Singleton. "It's a program to mentor them so they can see what transportation is about."

Students like Delores Luevano and Emanuel Higgins have moved on from the TCAP program to become college interns at MTA.

"We have many students who are success stories who move onto college and become professionals," Singleton says. "It is definitely encouraging to know that MTA is a part of developing young people for the future. I am very happy to be a part of this program."

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