

## Weitzman Externship Program



*Benita (Lily) Cheng (MCP'21), completed a virtual externship with the Philadelphia-based planning and urban design firm Interface Studio LLC in January of 2021.*

### Overview

The Stuart Weitzman School of Design offers an externship program for architecture, landscape architecture, and city planning students. An externship is similar to an internship in terms of the scope of the work and the expectations of the student. The main difference is the length of time spent working. Typically, externships last from 1-2 weeks and run during winter and spring breaks.

### Externship Program

The Weitzman School of Design Externship Program equips graduate level architecture and landscape architecture students with real world experience by taking their learning outside of the classroom. This allows students to expand their range of skills while connecting with working professionals. The sponsoring firm gains an opportunity to engage with the constantly evolving pedagogy of academia while also cutting back on recruiting time as the externship can act as a precursory interview for a summer internship.

Possible benefits to participating in an externship include:



- Having a unique opportunity to complement a formal education with a jumpstart to their career by gaining marketable work-experience
- Contributing to the design process by utilizing various software platforms
- Working with and shadowing a designer during the week
- Attending meetings and presentations
- Touring work sites

Some of the firms participating in the Weitzman School Externship Program pay a small stipend. Students will be responsible for any travel or housing arrangements, meals, and any related expenses. There are a limited number of travel stipends available for students who apply.

## Eligibility

Current graduate students are eligible to participate in the Weitzman School Externship Program. International students are eligible only if they have completed two full semesters and apply for CPT. International students do not need CPT for one day externships.

## Application

Students are required to complete an application form including a short essay describing their goals for participating in the Externship Program and how it relates to their course of study or career goals. Students must also submit a curriculum vitae and sample portfolio.

## Matching Process

Following an application process, students rank their top five firms based on descriptions provided by the firms. The firms are provided with the profiles of students who are interested in their office and choose their top five choices as well. Matches are made based on mutual selection.

## Participation

During the:

- 2019 session there were 25 externs and 17 participating firms
- 2020 session there were 38 externs and 31 participating firms

## Transition through COVID-19

Several adjustments were made to accommodate students and firms during the pandemic. The 2021 session included options of virtual externship days and virtual externship weeks. Firms that participated in an Externship Day uniquely crafted each experience and included sessions like one-on-one portfolio reviews and “Ask Me Anything” with firm founders, partners, and designers. All externships for the 2021 session were virtual with 10 participating firms and 52 externs.

## Externship Sites

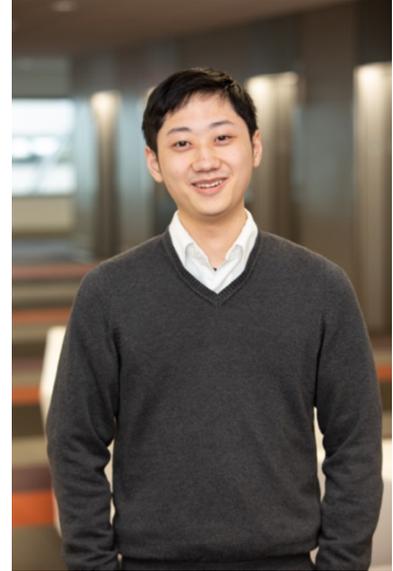
Students participate in externships across the country. Past participating firms: BLT Architects, Curtis + Ginsberg, Ewing Cole, FXCollaborative, Gensler, Handel Architects LLP, HOK, Interface Studio LLC, Jacklitsch/Gardner, James Corner Field Operations, Kieran Timberlake, KPF, Payette, Perkins Eastman,

Perkins + Will, Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC), PORT Urbanism, Related Companies, SOM, Studio Skaggs Kennedy, and Warren Techentin Architecture.

## Testimonials

The following articles highlight several student experiences:

- [New Externship Program Offers “A Foot in the Door” and More, by Lauren Hertzler](#)
- [Externships in Retrospect: Lily \(Benita\) Cheng](#). Lily completed an externship with the Philadelphia-based planning and urban design firm Interface Studio LLC.
- [Externships in Retrospect: Madeleine Ghillany-Lehar](#). Madeleine participated in a virtual externship day with James Corner Field Operations.
- [Externships in Retrospect: Keke Huang](#). Keke completed an externship at the Philadelphia-based planning and urban design firm Interface Studio LLC.



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