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The topic of whether internships should be mandatory to graduate came up in a class recently, and without ever giving it any thought before then, I instantly had my answer and multiple reasons why they should not be.

The question was mainly talking about the school of communication in particular, but then the discussion ventured to if all other majors should be required to have one as well. I disagreed that the communication majors should have to have one, and I was even more adamant about the fact that no, not everybody should be required to have an internship to graduate. It just wouldn't work and doesn't make sense for a multitude of reasons.

First and probably most importantly, there just aren't enough internships available for that to be feasible in a more populated area, let alone at a place like Radford. Even if it were somehow manageable, it would dilute the entire process and defeat the purpose of having an internship in the first place.

People wouldn't get the same valuable experience that they do now, because there would be less on the job training and work to go around if a place was suddenly flooded with interns. The school would have to make some sort of agreement with a number of different businesses just to set that many students up with an internship, which brings me to my next point.

An internship is something that should be somewhat earned. Whether the application or interviewing processes were rigorous and demanding, or you just simply inquired about a position and were given the job doesn't particularly matter.

At least there was some effort put forth by the student to do something other than signing up for another class or two while sitting on their couch getting baked. Yes you do get college credit for your internship, but at least you are showing an extracurricular interest in your particular major, which seems to be becoming more of a rarity these days.

It is something that should make your résumé stand out from your peers when applying for jobs post graduation. If everyone had an internship to put on their résumé, it would

essentially negate one of the main reasons to get one in the first place.

The rules and regulations for where you could do your internship would have to be relaxed immensely to accommodate for the massive increase in required internships. Also, it would be much easier to guilt a faculty member or potential employer in to helping you or giving you an internship that isn't deserved when they know you will not be able to graduate until you get one.

It could definitely bring up a lot of situations similar to getting a pity D from a professor when they knew good and well you deserved to fail the class but didn't want to be the reason you are coming back for another semester to retake just their course. I'm not saying that it happens often, but nobody can honestly say it hasn't happened or won't happen again.

What about the students that have to work a paying job while in school just to make ends meet? I know that that may be already keeping them from getting an internship under the current guidelines that are in place, but does it need to be that much harder for those students to balance a job and a full course load? I don't think so.

Also, what about students that do not have the luxury of having a vehicle to travel to and from said internship? I'm not talking about Joe DUI that lost his license going to get another keg for the boys. I mean the students that legitimately cannot afford a reliable source of transportation or can't afford any vehicle at all.

Are they supposed to be at even more of a disadvantage for not having the monetary means necessary to afford what many of us consider to be a right rather than what it actually is, a luxury? Once again, I don't think so.

Another thing I didn't really see being brought up was the competition that would come from other universities that implemented similar graduation requirements. Say a school that has about 20,000 more students than Radford and is about 15 minutes down the road? I'm not implying that Virginia Tech students are that much better than us that we couldn't possibly get an internship that they also applied for.

In fact, I'm not even saying they are better than us at all. I am proud to go to Radford, and I am very happy with the professors and the education that I have received thus far. But, lets all take our daily dose of reality and face the facts. Virginia Tech is considered the more prestigious university and has a much bigger student body than we do and right or wrong, the name of the school you attend on your application matters to employees, regardless of

the fact that you may be the more qualified candidate.

If Radford required all of its students to get an internship in order to graduate, you don't think they would at least consider it, if even for just some of their programs? Which brings me back to my original point of diluting the process. The New River Valley and Roanoke areas are only so big, and there are only so many internships to go around.

Employers should choose students for an internship based on their qualifications or at the very least, because they showed an interest in the position when others didn't, not because they know that if they don't, they may be keeping a student from graduating. That just seems dumb.