Example of Assessment Paper

Instructions: The assessment paper is to be submitted at the end of the internship. The paper must be at least three pages typed double-spaced. It is recommended that you discuss the following: whether you met your professional, academic and personal goals, what you liked and didn't like about the internship and what diversity issues you found or were discussed in the workplace. If your paper is short, consider discussing what you've liked and not liked about your journalism / public relations / advertising program. Below is an example of a well-developed and well-edited assessment paper.

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Professional goals

During my stay and internship in Washington, D.C., I have grown as a person – not only on a personal level, but on a professional level as well. My experience at the Health Insurance Association of America went beyond being a "regular" intern. My fellow co-workers made me part of the overall team – giving me an enormous number of responsibilities and projects to do. Throughout the past four months, I have proven without a doubt that I deserve credit for my internship at HIAA.

Before I got here, I was extremely confused about which internship to take. I had a lot of offers, but HIAA just sounded like it would give me more opportunities. Chris Orestis, director of external affairs and my agency supervisor, interviewed me on the phone and made it sound like I would benefit greatly from the internship. I was a little bit apprehensive about taking the internship, though. I did not know anything about health insurance or the health insurance industry at all. My first week was more or less my falling flat on my face. I had to learn the "ins" and "outs" of a trade association; what PPO, HMO, POS and MEWAs stood for; what grassroots and grasstops campaigns were. At the beginning, I seemed to lag behind my fellow interns at HIAA.
Today I'm entering the closing chapter of my internship. My final days are happy and sad. I have no regrets about my internship at HIAA.

I have examples of external communications that Orestis; Brian McCarthy, associate director of external communications; and Jordan Rapp, manager of political communications, gave me to do. I was able to show my grace and clarity in writing through the work they gave me. I finally handled with ease an enormous amount of work that they gave me, and they threw plenty at me.

A strategy of HIAA is to create as much media coverage as possible. The first campaign I worked on involved writing an article that was a rebuttal to an editorial that was published in *The Kentucky Ledger*. Many times, including this one, I was thrown the ball with little knowledge or understanding of the subject. I would have to literally educate myself on the topic and then compose a logical explanation of why a policy would not be in the best interests of Kentucky residents.

Next I wrote an opinion piece about a proposed state-mandated TMJ benefit in Wisconsin. There were two problems with the legislation. First, there was confusion among physicians on how to diagnose and treat TMJ. Secondly only a small percentage of people have TMJ. Therefore, including the benefit would increase insurance premiums for everyone and leave more people without insurance because they wouldn't be able to afford the increased premiums for a benefit they didn't need.

Finally many of the other pieces of writing I did were rough drafts of talking points, letters to the editor, business letters and lists that were used for several mailings.
The biggest project I did and the one I'm most proud of is the Internet directory I created for HIAA. I found more than 150 Web sites around the country that would be beneficial to HIAA staff, member companies and grassroots coordinators. I developed a hard copy of the Internet directory, and then I designed it on the computer. The whole process was extremely interesting.

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At HIAA I had to be extremely versatile because of the varied projects I worked on. Orestis was working on the budget for the external affairs department, and he needed help designing a spreadsheet. I had never used Excel, but I designed two charts that were used at the board of directors meeting concerning the budget.

I also had a variety of short- and long-term projects I worked on while at HIAA. For example, McCarthy and I came up with a template that could be used to create a workable file on states that he had coalitions in. He needed easy access to general information about those states. Items in the template included the capital, population, governor, breakdown of the makeup of the legislature, major cities, major newspapers, list of member companies, major companies and coalitions, and HIAA's retained counsel in the state.

In addition, anytime a state came under attack on an issue of importance to HIAA, I did research to find out everything I could about the situation. I wrote memos about our competition, genetic testing and the President's Commission on Quality of Health Care. I created lists of top insurers and managed care providers and health care trade
associations. As a result of all of these tasks, I learned a great deal about the health insurance industry and what is concerning health care consumers in the '90s.

One of the most exciting assignments I had was to attend a news conference where HIAA was under fire. Senators Edward Kennedy, Tom Daschle, Ron Wyden, Paul Wellstone and Jay Rockefeller were attacking HIAA and one of its internal memoes that the senators had obtained somehow. I gathered information on the type of media there, who the main players were and took notes on what was said. It was my job then to meet with HIAA media relations professionals to tell them what happened so HIAA could be better prepared when media calls started coming in as a result of the news conference.

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**Academic goals**

Academically I used every bit of my Ball State education during the internship. I still had a lot to learn when I arrived at my internship, but I believe I was prepared well to tackle the assignments I was assigned and assumed. My internship experiences exceeded my expectations. My internship allowed me to be right in the middle of the action that takes place in D.C. I got my wish in that I had numerous opportunities to see how politics in our nation's capital and media interact.

The political science source I took in D.C. during my internship was excellent.

During my internship, I believe I received an excellent education that will serve me well as I prepare to return to Washington, D.C., to begin my career after graduation.
Personal goals

The first few days of my stay here in D.C. had me more than just a little worried. My parents GM Blazer was broken into at the Holiday Inn in Rosslyn. All my personal belongings were stolen – stereo, car phone, clothes, jewelry and even my case of Pepsi. Check-in at my apartment was not a pleasant experience because I didn't have my belongings. We had just come from the Arlington Police Department, walked from the Holiday Inn in extremely hot weather and was very shaken by the whole experience.

More than anything, though, my time here in D.C. has let me grow as a person. I have educated myself in the history of this dynamic city, the great leaders of this nation, the inspiring artwork and what it means to be an American. My self-esteem has grown immensely. My confidence level has exceeded heights I never thought were imaginable. Even with how my stay started, I have no regrets about coming to D.C.

Diversity issues

I am from a middle-class family in Central Indiana. It was only after high school graduation that there was any emphasis put on women in my family to go on to college.

Now, with only one semester left at Ball State and an internship in Washington, D.C., under my belt, I will be the first one in my family to graduate from college.

During my internship at HIAA, I got the opportunity to work alongside professional women who were smart, “feisty” and, most importantly, strong in their commitment to change the role of women in the workplace. Each of the women was in charge of various activities and projects at HIAA.
Fortunately, the role of women is changing in the professional world. Unfortunately, the professional world is not as fast as professional women want it to change. At HIAA, I learned and experienced that (1) you must be strong and ambitious; (2) you can be too strong and ambitious; (3) you need women and men with more workplace experience than yourself to help you get your message heard.

Overall, my internship introduced me to how much more I needed to learn in order to interact effectively with women and men and with women and men of different ages.

**Conclusion**

I believe my internship at HIAA and in D.C. has conditioned me to be ready to meet the challenges I will be confronted with in the "real world."

**Note:** Trish Taylor Jones has worked in Washington, D.C., since she graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science in 1997. She returned to Ball State as a professional-in-residence speaker in the journalism department during the 2002-03 academic year. She did her journalism internship as part of a special program at The Washington Center in Washington, D.C.