'Preflections' from the Class of 2008 AECT Conference Interns

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Original Publication Citation
ECT Interns (28). 'Preflections' from the Class of 28 AECT Conference Interns. TechTrends, 53(1).

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
West, Richard E.; Lee, JeongMin; Pastore, Raymond; Xu, Mengqiao; and York, Cindy S., "'Preflections' from the Class of 2008 AECT Conference Interns" (2009). Faculty Publications. 893.
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/893

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A Brief History of the AECT Internship Program

In 1978, Earl F. Strohbehn, professor of education at San Jose State University, established a trust fund through the ECT Foundation to help support a deserving graduate student's attendance at the Lake Okoboji [Iowa] Leadership conference. His mentor and friend, Lee Cochran inspired the Okoboji conference to develop leaders in the field of educational communications and technology. Earl Strohbehn began his profession in the audiovisual field in 1945 as Director of Audiovisual Services in the Cedar Falls, Iowa Public Schools. It was his wish that in the event the Lake Okoboji conference was discontinued, his donation would be used to support graduate students in the field in the manner deemed best; hence, the current internship funding at AECT’s annual convention.

Lee W. Cochran began earning his living by rewinding films in the Visual Services Department of the University of Iowa in 1923. Forty-six years later, he retired as Director of the Audiovisual Center. During World War II, Lee was one of a small group of pioneer educators who, serving in the Training Aids Divisions of the Armed Forces, proved that films and other visual materials could teach essential procedures more effectively and efficiently than the traditional lecture method. As a member of the National Education Association’s Division of Audiovisual Instruction (DAVI), he traveled with a team nation-wide assisting school systems in establishing self-evaluation guidelines for development of audiovisual resources and services. Lee served as President of DAVI from 1954-55, and during that time organized the Educational Media Leadership Conference at Lake Okoboji, Iowa. Annual reports from the conference were examined and studied by educators in many fields throughout the nation.

Not only was Lee dedicated to education and the utilization of audiovisual methods, he also served as a mentor and advisor for the generation of educators who followed him. The Lee W. Cochran estate provides funding, through the ECT Foundation, for the AECT Convention Internship Program. It strives to enhance the involvement of graduate students in AECT.

[Source: AECT, Edited by Robert Harrell]
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Class of 2008 AECT Conference Interns

Strohbehn Intern

Rick West, University of Georgia

“Six years ago I attended my first AECT conference as a first-year master's student. I was still unsure of the association and the profession as a whole. That first conference was a marvelous experience as I met many wonderful people, learned a little more of my own interests in instructional design, and got my feet wet in AECT service as a volunteer. I remember seeing the interns that year, and feeling that they were a great example of what I wanted to become, as they seemed so confident in their academic and professional skins. This year I was excited to learn that I would be selected as an intern myself. In a way, this feels like my graduate career has come full circle. I still feel that I meet wonderful people every year at the conference, and I still enjoy serving in the AECT organization. I also feel I still have much to learn, but that's the most exciting part—how much the internship is designed to help us learn and grow. From the schedule and guidelines we've received before the conference, I am thrilled at the many opportunities we should have for more development as interns this year. I cannot think of any other professional organization that provides a similar opportunity for graduate students.”

Cochran Interns

JeongMin Lee, Florida State University

“At my first AECT convention in 2005, I met many wonderful fellow professionals and faculty members from all over the world, who provided me with considerable experience and insight into scholarly research. I value their advice, which included the suggestion to participate more actively in the larger community
of AECT. Therefore, I have served annually as a presenter, paper reviewer, session facilitator, and conference volunteer for subsequent conventions. I believe that engaging in these opportunities has broadened my knowledge and skills in this field. Also during those times, I read several articles in TechTrends about the ‘magic’ experience of internship and they encouraged me to apply. I did not expect to receive the award, and now I feel deeply honored to have been selected. I am especially excited about the opportunities that this internship will provide for meeting prestigious scholars and discussing my interests with them. At the same time, I look forward to sharing what I learn through AECT with other graduate students after the conference.”

Raymond Pastore, Penn State University

“As a recipient of the 2008 AECT Cochran internship award, I look forward to participating in this year’s conference, On the Horizon: Rays of Change, in Orlando. When I received notification of this award, I was thrilled. Being recognized by AECT as a graduate student gives me confidence and motivation to continue to work towards my goals. I anticipate that this experience will contribute to my professional development and future as an educator in the Instructional Design and Technology field. I am excited that I will have the opportunity to interact with peers and faculty members from universities around the world. Additionally, I am eager to attend a myriad of presentations. I look forward to hearing from leaders in the field and from those that share my research interests. I view this experience as a wonderful opportunity for a graduate student to contribute and participate in a professional association. I am very pleased to be selected as an intern for the 2008 conference and hope that I have the chance to continue to be involved with AECT throughout my career.”

Mengqiao Xu, Northern Illinois University

“Several years ago when I was first told about the ECT Foundation’s Internship Program, I did not realize how extraordinary this program is. However, during my program of study and especially during the internship application process, the more I read and talked with my professors about the program, the more I found how tremendous an honor it will be to become an ECT Intern. Another great opportunity to learn more about the internship was at the 2008 PIDT Conference. By
observing how the former interns, now the leaders, made their contributions to our field and by talking with them, I learned the essence of the internship program: privilege, opportunity, and the spirit of giving. It was such a pleasant surprise that I was awarded as one of the Cochran Interns for this year’s AECT convention. I believe there will be so many opportunities for me, as a graduate student and an intern, to learn, to develop and to network at the conference. And I also look forward to meeting the leaders in our field, shadowing them and starting to make my contributions to the AECT community.”

Cindy S. York, Purdue University

“As I was applying for the ECT Foundation’s Internship for AECT 2008, I reflected back on the past AECT conferences I have attended. My first AECT conference was 2005 where I volunteered at the registration desk. Because of this, I was able to meet a number of people in our field and I met one of the interns who sparked my interest in the internship. Although I knew the internship was extremely competitive I decided to apply, and am thankful I did. I was thrilled to learn I had been chosen as one of this year’s interns. I have realized as a graduate student, there are so many opportunities offered at AECT for networking and individual growth in our field and the internship offers additional opportunities to meet with leaders in our field and the AECT community as a whole. I hope to be able to share what I learn at the conference with my fellow graduate students who were not able to attend AECT this year.”

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The ECT Foundation is the non-profit foundation of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) and was established to carry out the purposes and programs of AECT that are charitable and educational in nature. The Foundation funds an extensive awards program that promotes scholarship and leadership in the field of educational communications and technology at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Because it is a non-profit organization, all donations to the ECT Foundation are tax-deductible and financial gifts to support its many programs are welcome. For additional information or to make a donation, write to ECT Foundation, c/o AECT, 1800 North Stonelake Drive, Suite 2, Bloomington, IN 47404 Phone: (812) 335-7675 Fax: (812) 335-7678

Submitted by:
Robert Harrell, “ect Cornerstone” Column Editor, 10/14/2008 10:38 AM