

Company goes international

Idea attracts interns from all over

By Patrick Ball
Staff Writer

Some months ago, a Croatian college student was scouring the Web for an English-speaking internship when the specific details provided by a program in Concord caught her eye.

The listing was for the Emerson Consulting Group, a Concord Center company that positions clients as “thought leaders” in their field. The description included an extensive list of the intern’s duties, what he or she would learn, what he or she would achieve, qualifications needed, schedule and tuition information and what past interns have to say about the experience.

For Tijana Salaj, it was an internship crossing the world for.

A student at the University of Zagreb, Salaj said Croatia does not have too many internship opportunities that set students down a career path. So it was an easy decision to hop on a plane for Boston, stay in Somerville with a roommate she found on Craigslist and catch the commuter rail out to Concord every morning.

Now, as she prepares to return home as soon as the program wraps up on Friday, Salaj said the experience was well worth it.

“I miss my parents and I miss my family,” Salaj said last week. “But I think in two weeks time I will want to come back here.”

Not ‘typing and filing’

It was not an accident that the Emerson group listing attracted attention from a student who knew exactly what she wanted. All of the information – about responsibilities, achievements and expectations – is there for a reason.

“I try to put all that out there so they know they’ll be involved with high-level stuff,” said Ken Lizotte, chief imaginative officer for Emerson Consulting Group. “It resonated with her even though she was half-way across the globe.”

This summer, the Emerson Consulting Group has had three interns working four days-a-week; One of them from Chelmsford, one from Concord and Salaj, from Croatia. A former intern from Bedford is also working in the office.

In the past, Lizotte said he has had interns from out of state, but Salaj is his first from another country. In an important.

The interns correspond with clients, e-mail publishers and research magazines for potential placements.

“You’re not running around getting coffee you’re multi-tasking,” said Elena Petricone, a 24 intern from Chelmsford. “At the beginning of the morning, you’re working on an article and by mid-afternoon, you’re working on business cards or the blog or a lot of different aspects of public relations.”

Intern relationships

The interns worked independently but in close quarters. They were able to bounce ideas off one another, and learn a little Croatian along with public relations.

“She tries to teach us words sometimes and laughs at us when we say them wrong,” said Lauren Fleming, an intern from Concord.

Before coming here, Salaj knew little about Boston aside from what her friend told her.

“They said it’s more European, I don’t know what that means,” she said. “I always compared New York and Boston and I said I could never live in New York, I Could stay there for two weeks as a tourist. But I could totally live in Boston.”

But now that she has experienced “running to catch the commuter rail with all these people,” and “realized that I love baseball,” Salaj will return to Croatia a Red Sox fan.

For her co-workers, Salaj’s moment of transformation was when she changed her Facebook profile to English. “That’s how it starts,” Petricone said.

Fleming, Petricone and Salaj all said they enjoyed the experience of working with a diverse group. “I think every one who’s worked here has had a different experience to contribute,” Fleming said.