
Work-based Learning Exemplars:

WORTHWHILE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS, LOCAL EMPLOYERS, AND THE COMMUNITY



Introduction

A professional internship is a point of entry into the workplace. It is also, in many ways, a rite of passage into adulthood. Young people welcome the chance to test their skills and knowledge and to discover more about what they want to learn and do next.

At NAF academies in public high schools nationwide, the internship is the culminating experience of rigorous core academics in history, math, science, and literature, complemented by career-themed education and a series of work-based learning experiences.

The NAF internship allows students to earn wages, school credit, equipment, or scholarship funds while they apply their classroom and job skills preparation in a real workplace, among adult professionals.

More often than not, NAF academy students expect to cover their own costs of living, including tuition at a two- or four-year college. The internship is invaluable to students looking for a way to maximize their earning potential while still in high school and immediately upon graduating.

To guide NAF academies in creating these opportunities, NAF brought together education and workforce experts and employers to identify the Gold Standards for Internships. According to the standards, NAF internship goals are well-defined and attainable. Supervision is constructive and accountable. Students are prepared for the experience in advance and assessed afterward to ensure a deep level of understanding and engagement throughout. In these and several other ways, internship experiences are as much a training ground for students in their chosen careers, as they are optimal opportunities to discover that these are not paths they want to invest in long term.

The highest quality internships are generated through dynamic partnerships between NAF academy directors, teachers, advisory board members, and community partners. These long-standing collaborations between academies and their business and community partners also yield the most internships.

While it's a challenge for NAF academies across the board to create the quality and quantity of internships that students need, not all internships look alike—and they don't need to. There are multiple ways to structure work-based learning experiences that meet both the Gold Standards and satisfy the internship requirement that allows students to earn a NAF Certificate upon graduating.

Today's NAF academy graduates can earn NAF Certification when they:

- 1. Demonstrate career knowledge, skills, and proficiency through end-of-course and project assessments, each one directly informed by industry professionals; and**
- 2. Complete an internship or culminating work-based learning experience that has been assessed by their supervisor.**

NAF is working with two- and four-year colleges and employers to recognize the certification, particularly as assessments align with industry expectations and prove that young people are ready for college and careers.

This report offers a close look at how four NAF academies have integrated elements of traditional and non-traditional internships to offer students a rewarding, culminating work-based learning experience—one that meets NAF Certification requirements and assures college and career readiness.

At each of the four featured academies, both the process of developing the work-based learning opportunity and the students' experience of taking part in it proved creative and enlightening for those involved.

Please enjoy this exploration of efforts completed or newly underway at Harmony Magnet Academy of Engineering in California; Skyline High School Academy of Hospitality & Tourism in Texas; Southwest Miami High School Academy of Finance in Florida; and Lancaster High School Academy of Finance in New York.

With this report, NAF aims to highlight best practices and ignite the imaginations of academy stakeholders nationwide who can trust that their own ingenuity—supported by the NAF academy model—will lead the way to creating meaningful work-based learning experiences that serve academies, communities, businesses, and students alike.



“Never discount the creativity of your business partners. Look at what your partners are bringing to the table and look to NAF to share best practices and help you with the details. As word gets out there about what we are all doing, it paves the way for everyone’s self-improvement. There are always others who are out there trying to do the same thing.”

— RANDY WALLACE
Director, School to Career Transitions

Students at Lancaster High School Academy of Finance research careers in the industry.

The NAF Internship Gold Standards were created by education and workforce development experts and employers to ensure that more students have access to the experience deemed most valuable by MDRC in their longitudinal study of career academies.

GOLD STANDARDS FOR INTERNSHIPS:

- Internships are part of a continuum of work-based learning.
- Internships are compensated.
- Internships drive educational equity.
- Internships are based on identified youth interests and learning objectives.
- Internship experiences align with academic learning.
- Internships produce valuable work that furthers employers' organizational goals.
- All participants are prepared for, and reflect upon, internship experiences.
- Systems are in place to support internship participants throughout the experience.
- Internships are assessed against identified youth interests and learning objectives.
- Internships occur in safe and supportive environments.

Virtual Internship in Engineering & Architecture

HARMONY MAGNET ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING

Gilbert Bareng is an architect who has drawn together a committed circle of support, including representatives from the school district, business community, nearby colleges, and NAF, to create a virtual internship open to Academy of Engineering (AOE) students at Harmony Magnet Academy as well as students from surrounding high schools.

Gilbert has been aware of Harmony's AOE ever since his architectural firm designed the school building in 2008. "My colleague and I wanted to give back," says Gilbert, from Mangini Associates Inc. Telling Parish McLain. "We thought, how wonderful would it be to teach the things we learned at Cal Poly (California Polytechnic State University) to high school students?"

The program, called INTERNnect, will engage high school students from the Harmony AOE and other local high schools to work in teams as interns on a single design project. Interns will be connected to college students in engineering and architecture who serve as mentors. They will access supervision and technical assistance from several industry professionals who will oversee the mentors and direct the teams via the internet.

"Before Gilbert came up with this idea, he was driving 32 miles to meet with students at the school," explains Randy Wallace, Director of School to Career Transitions for the Tulare County Office of Education. "It was going to cost him too much time and energy to keep going at the level of involvement that he wanted."

Randy is a key player among those serving on the INTERNnect Advisory Board, which includes Principal Architects from Gilbert's firm, Michael Tellian, Chris McLain and Scott Parish; NAF District Engagement Director, Mike Henson; ConnectEd Director of Media and Youth Development, Dave Yanofsky; Cindy Brown, Ruben Alvarez and Mimi Schuler from the Porterville Unified School District Pathways Program; and Rolando Gonzalez from the College of the Sequoias.

Another partner in developing the virtual internship is Doug Murdock, Harmony AOE class of 2012 graduate, who interned with Gilbert the summer before his senior year. Doug met Gilbert as a sophomore, when he took part in a tour of the architecture studios of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and had a chance to meet with college students and the department head. By the end of the day, it was clear that Harmony's students—their second year in the academy—were engaged in many of the same activities and using the same technology as the college students, who remarked, "We want to come out and tour *your* campus!"

The day was a hit with students and Cal Poly faculty and inspired Gilbert to create a summer workshop for six students. Doug was among the top performers in the workshop, which earned him and one other Harmony student paid internships at the firm.

Under Gilbert's guidance, Doug and his fellow intern measured buildings, drew them in AutoCad, and created plans. They visited job sites and got exposure to the construction field and met with consultants, structural engineers, and mechanical engineers. "I wanted these students to see that we're all interconnected," explains Gilbert, "and at the basis of everything we do is engineering."

Doug marvels at the contrast between what he did as a high school student and what his peers were involved in. "Everyone I know was working at a Best Western or McDonald's," says Doug, "it wasn't a track that they wanted. For this to be available to high school students is incredible."

The only thing missing, Gilbert realized, was a way to offer this experience to more than two students a year. "Since we physically don't have enough space to house more interns," says Gilbert, "we thought, let's create a virtual internship and do everything online."

Doug is now in his first year at College of the Sequoias and still works 15 hours a week at Mangini Associates. As part of the team that's expanding the internship program, Doug wants to reach more professionals. "If we can get mechanical and civil engineers from other places to do this," says Doug, "kids from everywhere can start learning what they want to do. The professionals will be training the kids to go into their field and can find someone they like, who is doing well and who knows their systems now."

To meet the Gold Standards for Internships, tasks will be outlined in advance of the project kick-off and will correspond to the varied levels of skills and expertise that students bring. Core competencies include geometry, trigonometry, and physics. Students will earn high school or college credit, and there will be stipends for the winners, paid for by community and business partners.

"Our plan is to share it with the whole industry, so that it can be regional or even national," says Randy. "There's real potential for opening it up."

Gilbert has identified the first design project: an education center for autism. "I want to teach the students that architecture isn't just about designing a building," says Gilbert. "You are designing for a client and that can lead you down a whole different avenue, with people whose careers are completely different from yours. So how will you take what you know about your own field and relate it to this area of health sciences?"

"Gilbert's an architect, so you would think he's prejudiced for me going into architecture," says Doug, who welcomes Gilbert's influence and trusts his opinions. "But whatever field I want to go into, Gilbert wants to help me get there and he wants me to be prepared for what I'm doing in college. He just really wants me to succeed."

CALIFORNIA



"If we can get mechanical and civil engineers from other places to do this, kids from everywhere can start learning what they want to do. The professionals will be training the kids to go into their field and can find someone they like."

— DOUG MURDOCK
AOE Class of 2012

Students from Harmony Magnet Academy of Engineering interned at Mangini Associates Inc. using the latest technology to take a building from a concept and blueprints through construction. The experience inspired the creation of a virtual internship that could reach more young people.

Marketing Pro-Bono for the Dallas Farmers Market

SKYLINE HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY OF HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

Tomiko Lewis seized an opportunity in 2011 for 13 of her students to develop and pitch a new marketing plan to revitalize the Dallas Farmers Market. Tomiko coordinates the Academy of Hospitality & Tourism and directs the Texas DECA District 11 for Skyline High School Academy of Hospitality & Tourism (AOHT). Multiple connections made it possible for her academy seniors to get involved in this non-traditional work-based learning experience.

That summer, Tomiko took part in a paid externship for teachers. She wanted to gain more experience in the hospitality industry and strengthen her professional networks and lesson plans. At the Dallas Convention Center, she shadowed Troy Thorn, the Assistant Director at the time, who chaired the Dallas Independent School District's AOHT Advisory Board and was liaison to Skyline AOHT. He offered a handful of internships through the Convention Center to students each year.

"In the two weeks I shadowed Mr. Thorn, we spent more time at the Dallas Farmers Market than at his office," says Tomiko, who accompanied him at several meetings to address problems. "He knew I taught marketing and said, 'We are really hurting here. Do you think your students could do this?'" She and Troy agreed to take it on together.

Skyline had recently been selected as a pilot site for the Youth-Plan Act Now! program, designed in partnership with the Center for Cities & Schools at the University of California, Berkeley and sponsored by Capital One and NAF. The project, known as Y-PLAN, gets students working with a local effort to study and improve it in a way that benefits the local community. Tomiko brought the idea of a collaboration with the Dallas Farmers Market to her partners at the Center for Cities & Schools and Capital One, who gave it the green light.

"We brought the students in as consultants," says Troy, who envisioned the Dallas Farmers Market as a resource for people who lived and worked nearby, and as a tourist destination for hotel guests and people in town for conferences. "We didn't tell students what to do or how to do it. We just explained that we needed to increase activity and visibility, and they ran with it."

The Dallas Farmers Market has been in operation for 70 years and enjoys a central location in Dallas. Yet, sales dwindled and the attendee numbers weren't good. Several students had never been there before. "They asked me, 'Can we eat the samples they give to us?'" says Tomiko, who observed her students file in and get to work. They had prepared surveys for customers, surveys for vendors, and were taking notes on the layout, atmosphere, signs, and flow of foot traffic.

Christian Valdez, a Class of 2012 AOHT graduate, describes the students' goals: "We wanted to know from vendors, 'What is the number one advertisement you rely on?' From customers, 'How long have you been coming here?' and 'Why is this better than a grocery store?'" Students conducted additional research and considered what else a local farmers market could offer besides fresh, organic produce.

TEXAS

"They came up with so many recommendations," says Tomiko. An internet café. Nighttime hours. Car shows and autograph signings by Dallas star athletes. She adds, "My job was to keep them coming back to how this benefits the Dallas Farmers Market." Jessa Thomas from Capital One also came by to spend the day, hear ideas, and offer feedback.

The project spanned three months and culminated with a 20-page report written collaboratively by students and a PowerPoint presentation for the pitch; students had memorized their parts. Soon they would present it to Mr. Thorn and his staff, Skyline AOHT Advisory Board members, and representatives from the Center for Cities & Schools and Capital One. Every student had a role to play—though some had doubts.

Tomiko recalls students practicing and getting their presentation boards together, when one of them asked, "Are these people really going to listen to us? We're high school students—we don't know anything!" Tomiko replied, "You know more than you think you do. You know the competition. And Mr. Thorn has faith in you."

Christian says they all "shared the mike" as they delivered the rationale for various recommendations, including signs off the freeways, new paint for the shed tops, lower monthly rent for vendors, color on the ceilings and the concrete floor, a website redesign, and new brochures. "They fielded some tough questions in that room," says Tomiko. "Each time, the person who felt like they could answer stood up and handled it."

Troy welcomed the students input. "It was great for us to get some energy from the younger generation and get a more multicultural perspective," says Troy. He cites one idea students brought up that he and his team hadn't considered: activities for teenagers.

"We'd done family friendly programs but nothing whatsoever for teens," says Troy. "It was interesting to hear them say, 'What about us? You left us out!'—when we all know that adolescents are very active consumers."

Other successes included a brochure the students created which the hotels downtown were happy to distribute to guests. Christian and a classmate also shaped the presentation as a DECA project and took it all the way to Nationals. "All the interviews we conducted, all the surveys and research, all our recommendations, the PowerPoint—it was so well organized," he says. "The other DECA teams did some YouTube video or projects that were just for fun. Ours was fun—and it was local, it was a big deal, and it was helpful for the community."

"They got out of the four walls of their classroom and found they had the skill sets they needed for a professional environment," says Troy. "We handed them the responsibility, the academy held them accountable, and they rose to the occasion. What it did for me is affirm that our future is in good hands, and I enjoyed every moment."



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—CHRISTIAN VALDEZ
AOHT Class of 2012

Students at Skyline High School Academy of Hospitality & Tourism developed a marketing plan to revitalize the Dallas Farmers Market. They also created a brochure that was distributed in Dallas hotels.

Financial Preparation = Financial Power

SOUTHWEST MIAMI HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY OF FINANCE

At Southwest Miami High School Academy of Finance (AOF), internship preparation includes a strong incentive for students to take money seriously and invest it in a way that benefits the entire school community.

A key partnership between Southwest Miami High School and the South Florida Educational Federal Credit Union makes this possible. The Credit Union is a nonprofit financial institution owned by its members and open to Miami Dade College and Miami-Dade County Public Schools students, employees, and families.

“This school system is our bread and butter,” says Soley Gonzalez, who runs Community Relations at the Credit Union which has 60,000+ members, many of them students. “The partnership is a great marriage. We’re able to bring our financial literacy program to young people and make sure we’re engaged in their educational and workplace experiences.”

The financial literacy program is called “Got Green?” and focuses on money management and credit, basic investments, and the college financial aid process. The program is free and includes education for teachers as well. Soley serves on the Southwest Miami AOF Advisory Board as a representative of the Credit Union and the school’s largest internship provider. She runs what she calls an “internship boot camp” to get all students ready for the most important step in their financial empowerment: the ability to interview well and get the job they want.

Ethelence Aburto graduated from Southwest Miami High School AOF in 2008 and recalls, “We had a day where they would just have rounds of interviews conducted by about 10 to 15 business professionals who are associated with the academy. We all were interviewed once or even twice.”

“Students have been trained in what to expect,” says Doristine Williams, Lead Teacher at Southwest Miami High School. “Through this program, they can prepare for questions they may be asked, as well as questions they may want to ask.”

One interview the students set their sights on is the chance to work with the Credit Union itself, in an internship at the headquarters or a job in the mini-branch on high school grounds (it features a small waiting area, specialty services, and a transactions area with a teller window). The Credit Union hosts approximately 16 interns every school year in multiple departments, including IT, accounting, marketing, and lending. To find their top candidates, Soley reviews as many as 200 résumés and Human Resources chooses 75 students to interview. “The sixteen who get it know they earned it,” she says.

Soley relies on Southwest Miami AOF’s commitment to support students’ growth and career preparation and enjoys support from the Credit Union’s CEO and Board. “We started with three interns and that number increased based on resources and trust,” says Soley. “When our managers experienced the quality of students and what it meant to them, they wanted to be part of those outcomes.”

FLORIDA

The day of interviews did not stress Ethelence, who felt well-prepared—“I nailed the interview and got the job.” Yet she sympathized with her classmates who, like her, did not want to blow it. “We need an internship to graduate and we all look forward to the opportunity to get paid,” she explains. “Everyone is there to do well for ourselves, but we’re also representing the academy as best we can.”

Doristine observes that students are more attuned in general, thanks to the financial literacy and interview training. “The seniors have homecoming, prom, senior picnic...” she says. “With the economy as it is, they have to budget their involvement in these activities carefully.” Students are not just working to afford a special event or go to the movies anymore. She explains, “I now hear students say, ‘I had to help pay a bill.’”

Whether they’re working with the Credit Union or part-time at a Publix Supermarket, or both, Southwest Miami’s AOF students are opening accounts and saving money. As account holders and members, students also have a chance to win a four-year scholarship through the Credit Union, given each year to 15 randomly selected senior members.

The resources offered by the partnership with the Credit Union now define the culture of the school in many ways, and the benefits of membership flow in both directions. Students run the mini-branches two days a week and drive the Credit Union’s marketing campaigns on the other three days. “On days when the in-school branch is closed,” says Doristine, “students are presenting in classrooms, airing their videos on the in-school TV station, and working to meet their monthly quotas for new accounts.”

“No one is going to sell the program better than the students,” says Doristine, who recognizes the value that students and the Credit Union bring to one another—and school staff. “Our cafeteria workers, they love the credit union. If you have direct deposit, your money is already in your account on a Thursday. They like to count on that.”

Doristine attributes part of the success of this partnership to a philosophy embedded in the NAF academy model and espoused throughout the network. “Every academy has to take ownership of its resources,” says Doristine. “You need to survey your students, find out what is going on in your small learning community, and brand it.”

Now a graduate of Florida International University, Ethelence takes a similar stance. She is completing her Master’s at FIU and studying for her CPA license. She has already signed a contract for a full-time position with PriceWaterhouseCoopers to start in 2013. “The NAF academy experience makes you a treasured find in the candidate pool,” says Ethelence. “I know plenty of academy students still advancing at the place where they did their NAF internship. It adds immense value to a student’s life and their future.”



“We need an internship to graduate and we all look forward to the opportunity to get paid. Everyone is there to do well for ourselves, but we’re also representing the academy as best we can.”

— ETHELENCE ABURTO
AOF Class of 2008

The South Florida Federal Credit Union is the largest internship provider to the Southwest Miami High School Academy of Finance through the credit union’s headquarters and a branch at the high school. The school branch includes a waiting area, specialty services, and a teller window.

Career Discovery as Cultivation: More is More

LANCASTER HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY OF FINANCE

In 2004, Scott Dixon, Lancaster High School Academy of Finance Director and Teacher, approached his trusted colleague, Sandra Hope, to discuss offering students only paid internships from now on. For 15 years, Sandra had run a thriving internship program at the school as part of the New York State Department of Education Career Exploration Internship Program—all of them unpaid. “She asked me why and I said, because NAF expects us to,” says Scott, “and she laughed at me.” Sandra immediately set to work with Scott to make it happen.

Since neither of them expected employers to accept high school students as paid interns on faith alone, they decided to reposition their existing program as a steppingstone. Students would complete an unpaid job shadow rotation in the spring of their junior year, in order to make the leap into a summer paid internship more of a sure thing. Twenty-seven hours of classroom instruction that semester would be geared toward work-based professionalism and students would be dismissed early to go to their job shadow sites.

“The employers could get to know these students in the spring and even train them,” explains Scott. “We knew they’d realize our students were much more prepared than they expected, but there’s an out if they don’t want to take the student on. For students who face pressure to perform, they can decide, ‘I don’t like this,’ and not pursue it.”

This approach helped to solve the matter of compensation, but then the Lancaster AOF decided to grow from 40 to 75 students per academy grade. “That raises dramatically the number of volunteers who need to be involved as mentors and the volume of paid internships we need to generate,” says Ed Kilgore, who serves as Lancaster AOF Advisory Board Chair. “I asked the Principal to speak to us about the level of support the school would provide—since this would only succeed if everyone embraced it.”

Ed got involved with the Lancaster AOF when his eldest child enrolled 9 years ago—all three of his children have been students at the school. “At the introductory meeting for parents, they asked for help with mock interviews,” says Ed, who signed right up. He remembers interviewing five students. “Most people find me imposing in person,” he explains. “I am 6’2” and 200+ pounds, and I have military erect posture. So, to see those students present themselves with more professionalism than many of the people I interview in the course of my job completely blew me away.”

Ed joined the board and now attends monthly Advisory Board meetings in addition to parent meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and more. He’s instrumental in the Lancaster AOF Awards ceremony, the Interview Fair, and numerous year-round efforts to engage and keep support from local businesses and community leaders, and elected officials. “I write a lot of letters, by hand, to the folks who help us,” says Ed, “whether it’s the vendor who gives us a discount on tuxedos for our AOF Awards or one of the banks or insurance agencies who provide the base of our internships.”

NEW YORK

Even with such active and enthusiastic leadership on the Advisory Board, the Lancaster AOF needed to expand its contacts significantly to accommodate the jump in enrollment. “Our intention was to grow by 35 students in a year and a half,” says Erin Bortz, Lancaster AOF’s Business Teacher and Internship Coordinator. “We needed these students to start talking to people and help find their own internships.”

Erin and Scott created Career Discovery to broaden students’ awareness of careers by getting them into more workplaces. “I’d ask them to list their career interests and it was always the same—pharmacist or some sort of doctor,” says Erin. She decided all the students would benefit from spending time in the accounting, advertising, and human resources departments of any company, including in the nonprofit sector.

Lancaster AOF launched Career Discovery in the summer of 2012 with recent sophomores. To complete the project, students interviewed four professionals, shadowed two or three of them in their jobs for a total of 9 hours, completed an online survey to match their interests with a range of careers, volunteered three hours of community service, and journaled about their experience. “We presented it like summer reading, so they had some trepidation,” says Scott. “But the feedback I’ve gotten from the kids so far is great.”

Miranda Rozek, now a junior at the Lancaster AOF, shadowed a graphic designer with Channel 4 (her parents had worked there) and the CFO of an accounting firm (family friend). “I helped design a poster for the Erie County Fair at Channel 4,” says Miranda, “and the CFO showed me how she balances the finances of the whole company.”

To fulfill the community service portion of the project, Miranda drew on her own interests as a dancer. “I found this company called Danceability, and volunteered to teach dance to children with special needs,” says Miranda, who enjoyed it. “You just have to go slow and be really patient.”

In addition to expanding students’ view of their possibilities, Career Discovery opens the door for Lancaster AOF to introduce itself to students’ families, family friends, and neighborhood businesses. “When they return after the summer, students bring that packet with all the places they shadowed and the people they interviewed,” says Scott. “Now our advisory board members can reach out to those individuals to thank them and invite them to take part in the job shadowing and internship programs.”

“Career Discovery lets us light that spark,” says Erin. “After they spend time with the students, employers are more likely to say, ‘Sure—I would love to work with them!’”

“Even if it’s not the job you want, you can build on that,” says Miranda. “My job shadow hosts explained things to me. But even if they didn’t—just to be there and watch things happen really helps me understand how everything works and how I can bring some benefit to them and gain something for myself.”



“... to see those students present themselves with more professionalism than many of the people I interview in the course of my job completely blew me away.”

— ED KILGORE
Advisory Board Chair

Students from Lancaster High School Academy of Finance participate in a Career Discovery program during the summer after their sophomore year that includes informational interviews, job shadowing, career interest surveys, and community service. The school’s dedicated advisory board follows up with all the businesses that participate in Career Discovery to secure paid internships for all of their students.

“With this report, NAF aims to highlight best practices and ignite the imaginations of academy stakeholders nationwide who can trust that their own ingenuity—supported by the NAF academy model—will lead the way to creating meaningful work-based learning experiences that serve academies, communities, businesses, and students alike.”

— JD HOYE
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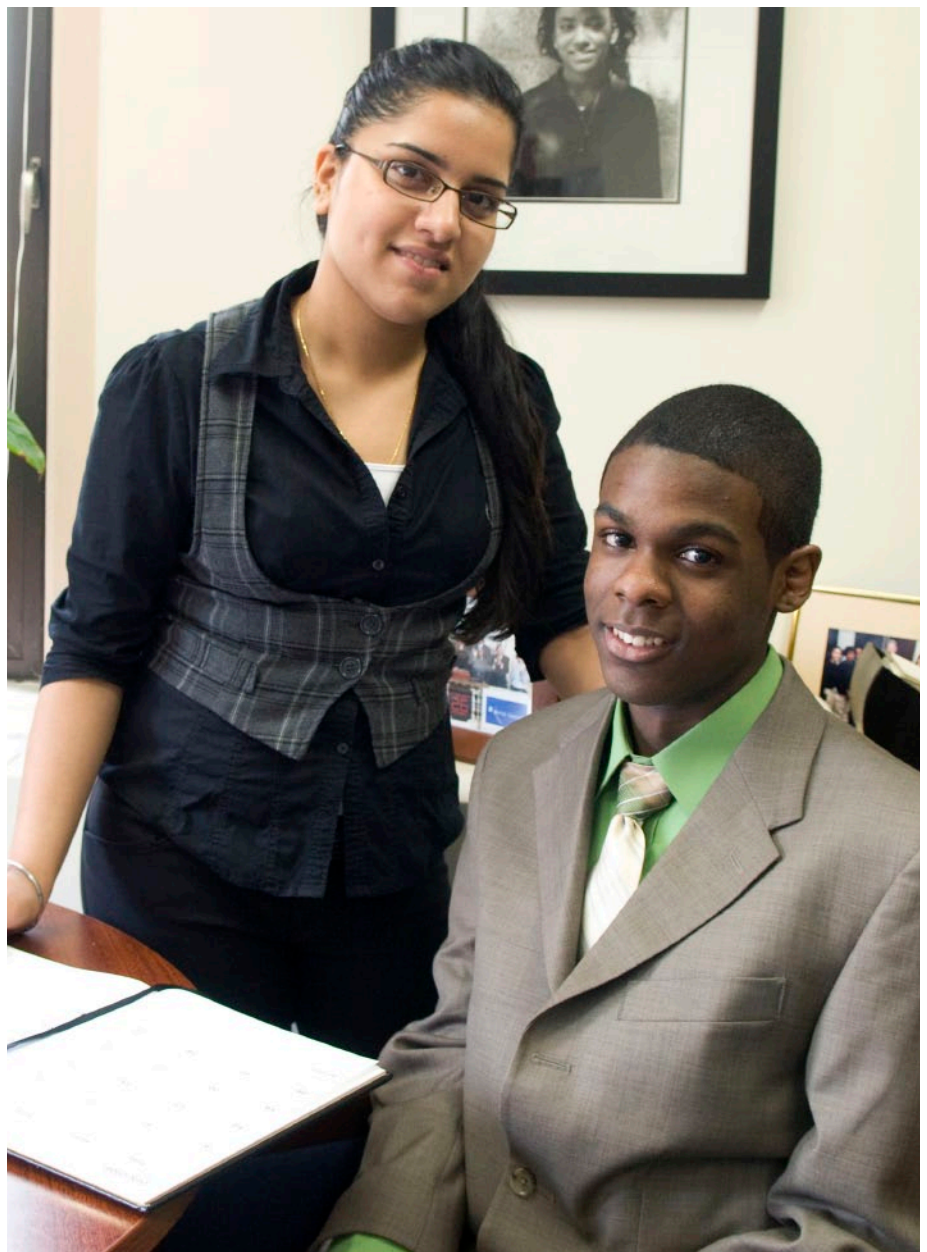
The National Academy Foundation is dedicated to preparing young people for college and career success using its proven educational model.

VISION

The National Academy Foundation envisions a world in which all young people have the skills, knowledge and experience needed to thrive.

ABOUT

The National Academy Foundation (NAF) is an acclaimed network of career-themed academies that open doors for underserved high school students to viable careers. For 30 years, NAF has refined a proven model that provides young people access to industry-specific curricula, work-based learning experiences, and relationships with business professionals. NAF academies focus on one of five career themes: finance, hospitality & tourism, information technology, engineering, and health sciences. Employees of more than 2,500 companies volunteer in classrooms, act as mentors, engage NAF students in paid internships, and serve on local Advisory Boards. During the 2011-12 school year 60,000 students attended 469 NAF academies across 39 states, D.C. and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In 2011, NAF academies reported a 97% graduation rate.



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