

2022 CIEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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Increasing Accessibility for International Students
through Global Internships in the Pandemic and Beyond

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



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University of Melbourne Engineering & IT - CIEE Partnership



- University of Melbourne has long standing relationship with CIEE
- Custom programs for Eng&IT - enrolled in for-credit internship course at UoM
- In person internships – Singapore, Berlin in Australian summer 2019/2020
- Virtual internships – Australian summers 2020/2021 and 2021/2022

UoM's COVID-19 remote programs with CIEE

- Custom program
- 15 students in 2021/22
- 40+ applicants
- Funded by Engineering & IT at UoM
- Range of IT, Information Systems and Engineering disciplines
- \$1500 USD per student
- Host companies: Germany, Canada, USA, Spain, Hong Kong
- Students: Australia, China and beyond



Increasing accessibility through virtual internships

- UoM traditionally very resistant to online learning
- COVID-19 forced our hand
- Now we have a new model for internships; and we have students gaining intercultural experience who never would have travelled
- Current objectives include *"Enhanc(ing) the experiences of students while they are engaged in international exchange or international internships (including virtual international internships)"*
 - Engineering & IT Business Plan, The University of Melbourne, 2022

An Australian, and Chinese, perspective on COVID-19

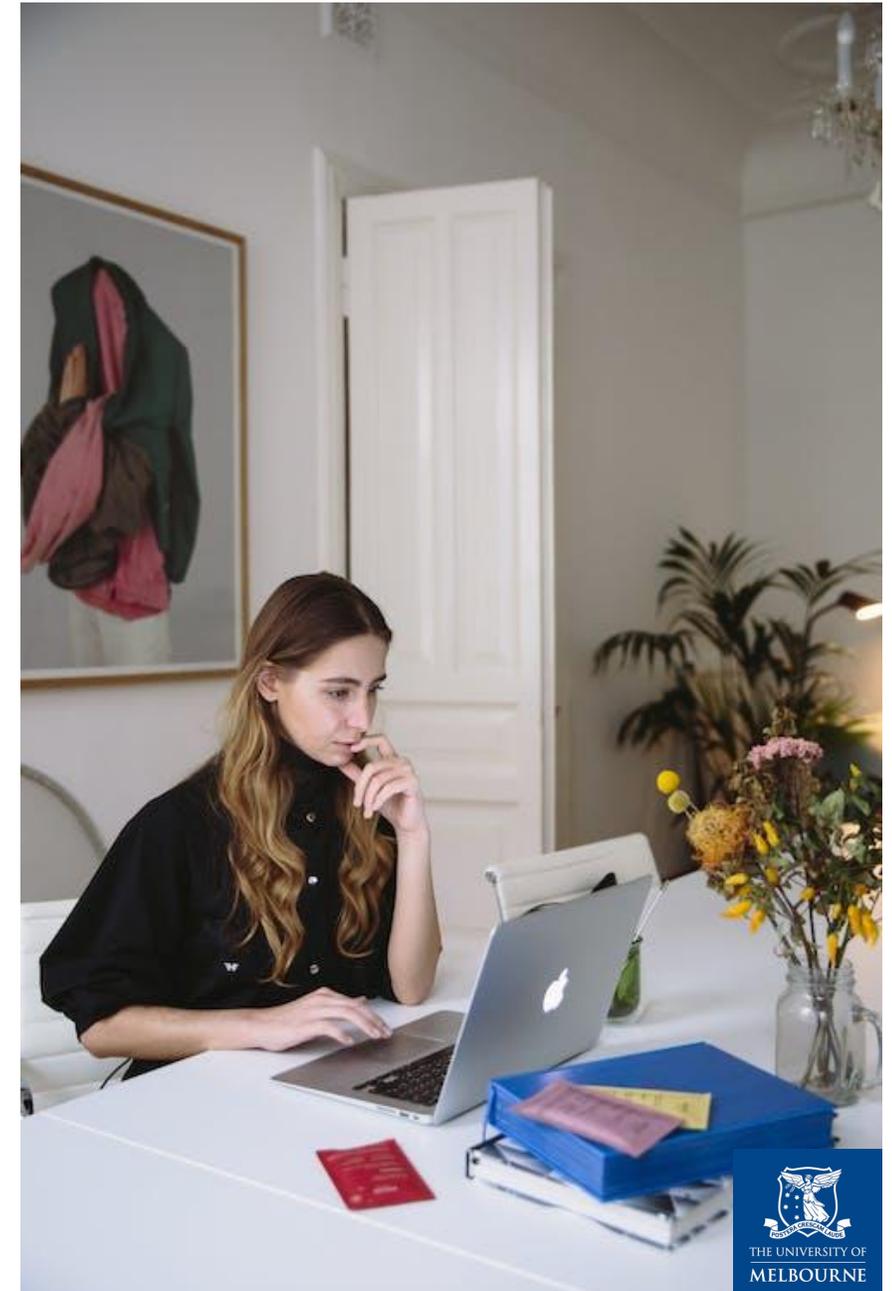
- Hard lockdowns; international and domestic border closures
- Until recently, Australians have been more risk averse than many nations when it comes to COVID
- Australian universities have a high percentage of international students, many of whom found themselves stuck outside Australia when our international border closed in March 2020
- Three years providing internships for students who remained offshore
- Thousands of students remain overseas
- Many Chinese students in Australia want to take internships with Chinese companies, but don't want to quarantine on entry
- Remote internships remain a key part of our offering in this COVID-context



What do we do with remote internships post-COVID?

Were they an emergency stop gap?
Or can we increase accessibility using new model?

- More affordable
- More flexible
- Gentle intro to cross-cultural work – less daunting
- Remove issues involved in obtaining visas



Re-framing Virtual Internships: Melbourne's perspective

- Remote international internships are about more than students' inability to travel, although they continue to cater to that, particularly for our Chinese students.
- These internships allow students to experience the reality of working in an international environment in the post-COVID world. You need to be able to build relationships, across cultures, solely on Zoom.
- They have a place in their own right, not simply as a "second best option" for students who would previously have travelled.
- We intend to build on the remote internship program that we created through necessity during COVID-19 and have it continue as an additional option for students, as part of a suite of internship and global program options.



Remote professional skills

- Internships are primarily about employability skills. International internships are about employability skills in a cross-cultural context.
- COVID-19 has permanently changed how we work. Remote and hybrid work is here to stay and universities have an obligation to provide internship experiences that reflect current and future workplace practices.
- By keeping remote internships, our view is that we have given students an additional option.



Best practice for virtual internships

From last resort to high quality program model.

- Embracing a new internship model for a new world.
- What do we need ensure is in place to guarantee a high-quality experience?
- Teaching professional and cross-cultural skills for the zoom and hybrid era:

"Topics that could currently be revised include the introduction of a remote work topic and a review of the cross-cultural topic (to move away from international students adapting to the Australian workplace and move towards a more holistic provision of cross-cultural frameworks through which students can filter their own unique experiences)." - UoM Engineering & IT Internships Review 2022

- Continuous feedback



Melbourne Connect Building (the new home of Engineering & IT), The University of Melbourne

UoM feedback

- Faculty think there is a place for remote internships but there are additional and specific challenges:
- Need to set expectations for host companies
- Ideally host companies should have other remote or hybrid employees
- More difficult for "hands on" disciplines
- Need to develop materials and modules for teaching professional and cross-cultural skills for the zoom and hybrid era ; constant updates

UoM student feedback trends

- Entire degree was online due to COVID, so an online internship didn't feel like a major shift
- Feedback mixed but students who had good experiences felt experience was highly valuable

"During my enrolment with the program, I was accepted as an intern with a Berlin based IT/Machine Learning company. One of the best things I've learned from this internship experience is time management and communication/collaboration skills. This is due to the large time difference (10 hours) between Melbourne and Berlin, so my team and I only had around an hour every day for meetings and consultations. This pushed me to better prepare myself before each meeting so they are as productive as possible, and that I can ensure my team gets the relevant information they need... Overall, the remote internship experience is a great experience to develop professional and interpersonal skills." - Alfaraz Wirawan (Berlin – Melbourne) summer 2021/22

Case study:

Student testimonial video

Lei Lu - University of Melbourne
student, Beijing, China

Peregrine Technologies GmbH
Berlin, Nov 2021-Feb 2022



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Audience activity:

Groups of 2-3

5 minutes

Come up with an activity to help develop students' cross-cultural skills in an online environment. This can be an adaptation of something you have used previously for face-to-face internships, or something completely new.

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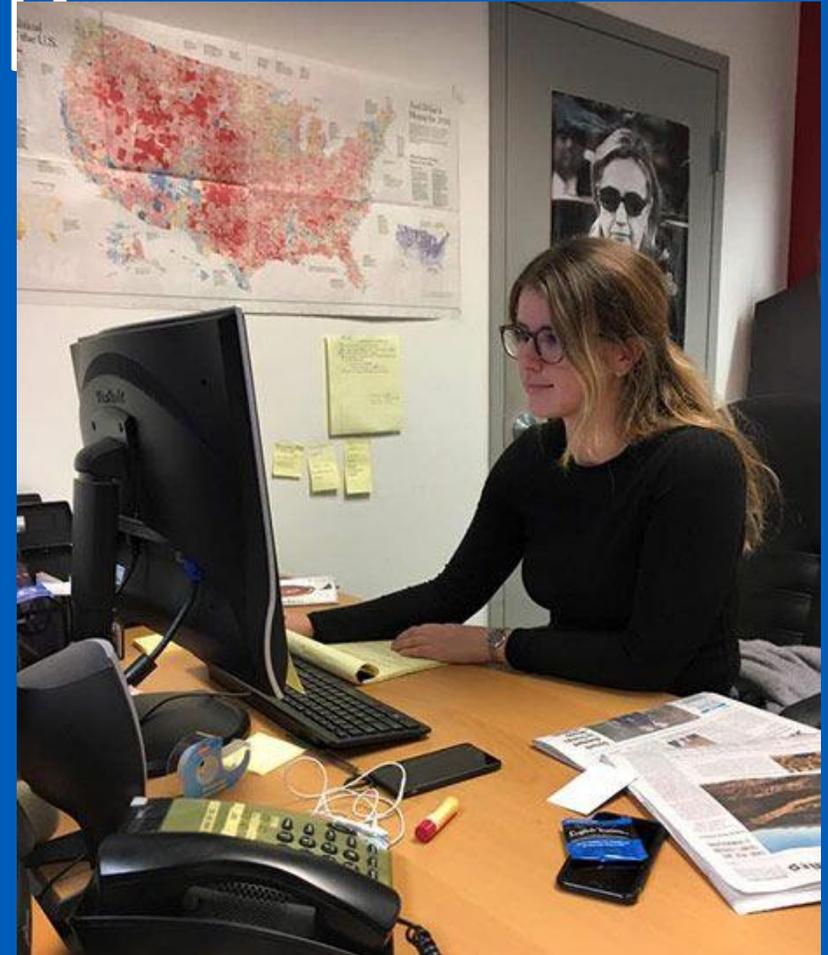
CIEE Mission: Virtual and Hybrid Internships



- CIEE Virtual and Hybrid Internships are closely aligned with the **CIEE Mission** of preparing **future leaders** who will be able to communicate across cultures to tackle issues confronting our globally interconnected and multicultural world.
- CIEE’s experiential learning programs, including internships, service-learning projects, and research opportunities, aim to open doors for people from all backgrounds and cultures.

CIEE Virtual Internship Program

- Credit and non-credit programs
- 8- or 12-week programs
- Weekly career-focused workshops and office hour check-ins for student interns



Audience activity:

Groups of 2-3

5 minutes

Discuss: What are some advantages and disadvantages of virtual and/or hybrid internship programs?

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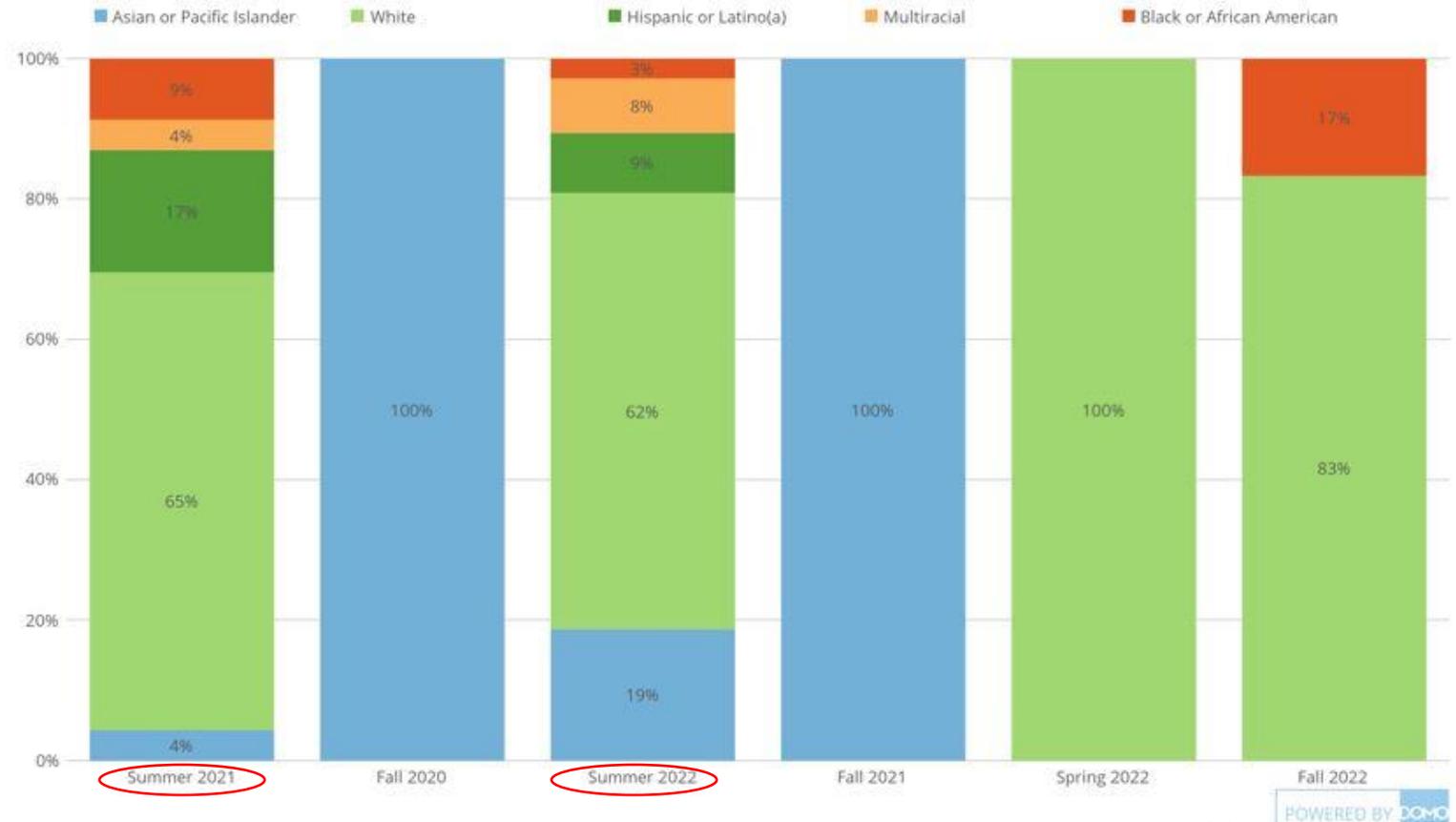


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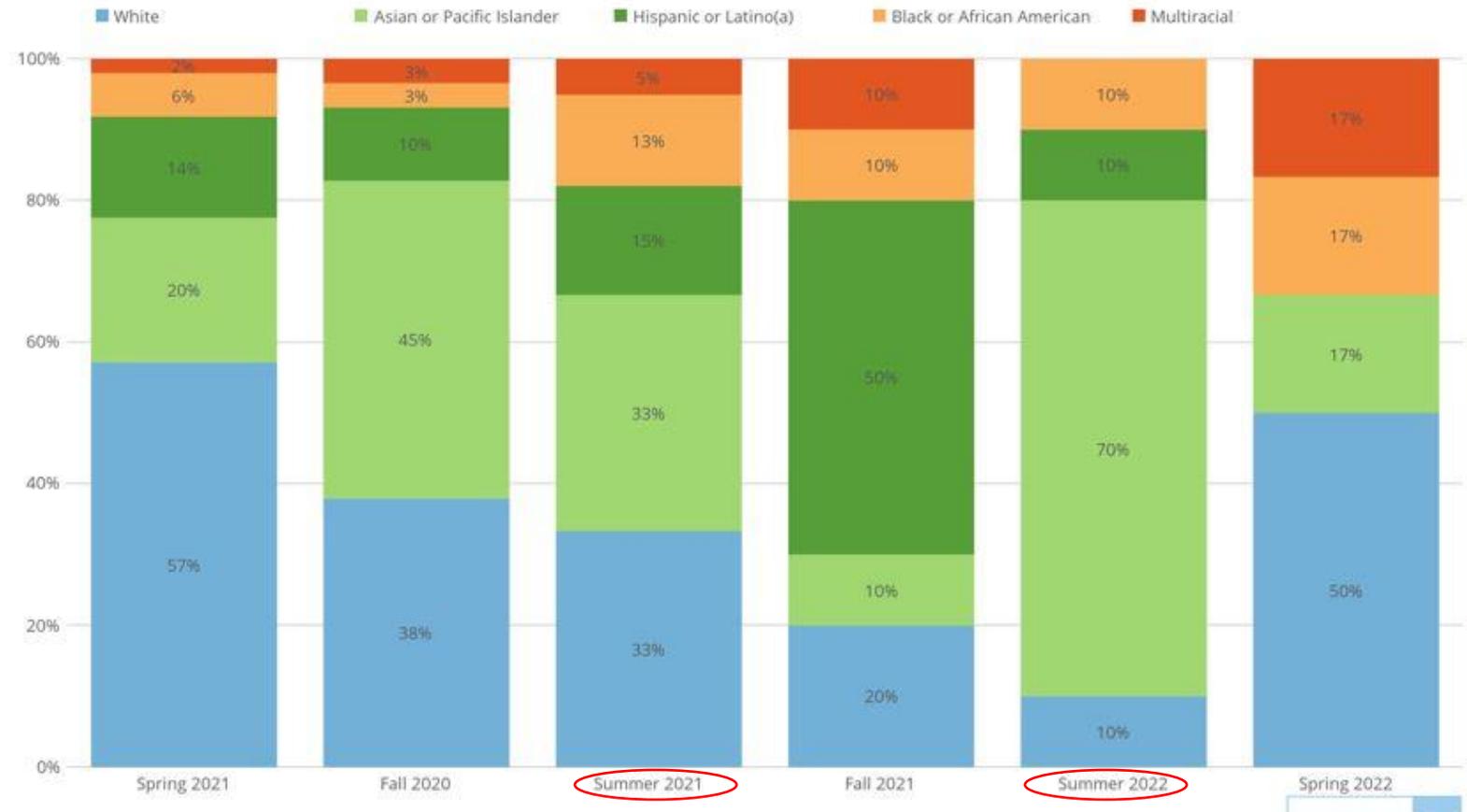
In-Person Internships - by ethnicity

- Summer terms represent our highest period of intake for internships
- Summer 2021
 - 35% Diverse backgrounds
- Summer 2022
 - 38% Diverse backgrounds



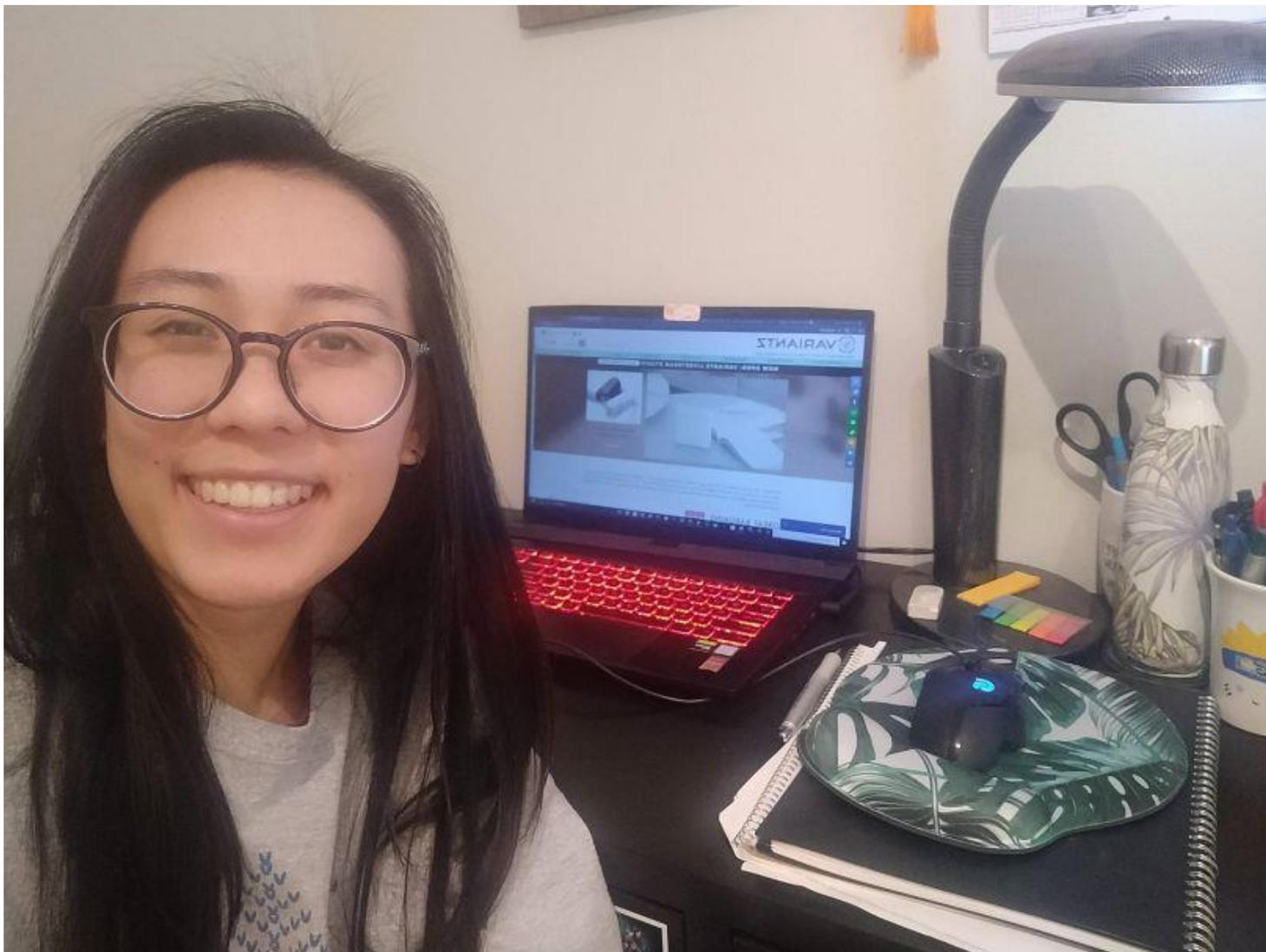
Virtual Internships - by ethnicity

- Summer terms represent our highest period of intake for internships
- Summer 2021
 - 67% Diverse backgrounds
- Summer 2022
 - 90% Diverse backgrounds



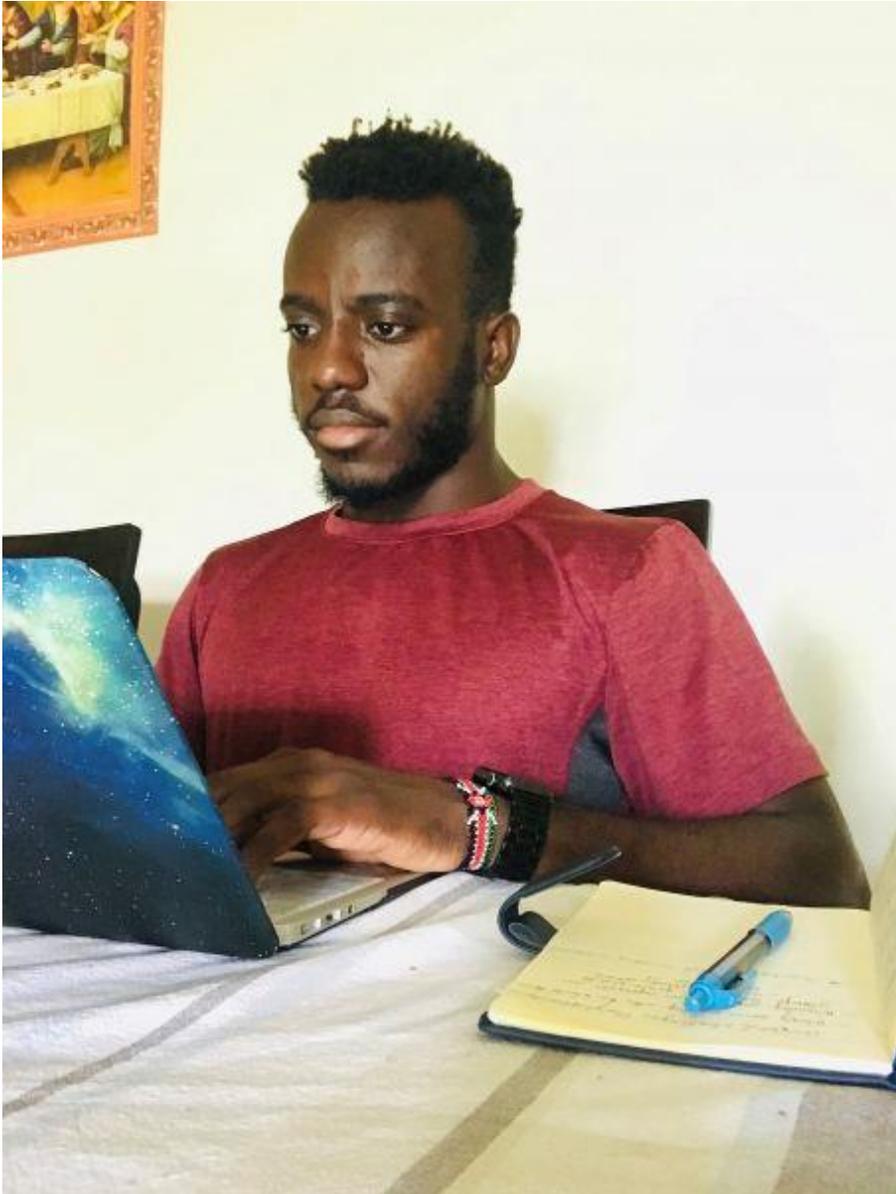
- CIEE Berlin Instructor
- Guest Speaker
- Internship Supervisor

Stephen Murray



- *Virtual internships and working from home are the new future, and I am very grateful to have this opportunity to venture into this new way of life. There is a different set of skills needed in this internship to succeed, and I think that it could be applied any of my future endeavors.*

- **Natalie Ma, Virtual Intern with Variantz in Singapore**



“It’s great working directly with engineers, and being an intern at such a small startup, you get to feel like your work actually does matter, that the tasks you have are important in the decision-making of the company,”

William Baya, CIEE Virtual Internship Student at Eden Geotech

What should students
consider when taking on a
remote internship?

Stephen Murray



“I am a strong believer that a student should always have responsibility for a dedicated project that she or he creates, runs, and evaluates as part of the internship. In a virtual setting this is even more important.”

**Steffen Heinrich,
Peregrine, Founder**

What should supervisors
consider when taking on a
virtual intern?

Stephen Murray

Audience activity:

Groups of 2-3

5 minutes

Discuss: As international educators how can we create a sense of community and the feeling of belonging to a cohort for virtual students?

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Questions and Comments

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Audience activity:

Groups of 2-3

5 minutes

Discuss: How can we ensure that the virtual internship does not become a second-class experience?

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