

**International Conference**  
**Employability of Graduates & Higher Education Management Systems**  
**WU Vienna University of Economics and Business**  
**Vienna, Austria, 22 & 23 September 2011**

**Implementation & Evaluation of an  
Internship Program in Relation to  
Academic Department's QAS & Goals**

**ANTIGONI PAPADIMITRIΟΥ  
DIMITRIS MARDAS**

**Department of Economics  
Aristotle University  
Thessaloniki, Greece**



Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση  
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο



ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ, ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ ΜΑΘΗΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ  
ΕΙΔΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΧΕΙΡΙΣΗΣ



ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ  
πρόγραμμα για την ανάπτυξη

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης

# Outline of the presentation


- Academic Program QA
- Internship's requirements in Greek Universities
- Academic Department Goals and IP
- Rational of an Internship Program
- IP Goals and Innovations
- IP Development
- IP Evaluation
- Conclusions

# Academic Program QA & Internship's requirements in Greek Universities

- Internship Institutionalization
- Mandatory or not? Students' Motivation
- Internship rules & procedures
- Department's Goals - Main Difficulties
- Skills & Internship targets
- Internship and Thesis-Capstone
- Opportunities for future employment
- Network between Depart. Society, Market
- Faculty involvement
- Monitoring Internship

The background of the slide features a light gray silhouette of an industrial plant with several tall smokestacks and large storage tanks. The sky is filled with numerous dark silhouettes of birds in flight, creating a sense of movement and activity.

# Internship Program Rational



Participation of students and market stakeholders in practical training program create a “win-win” synergy, in practice and not only in theory, for the purpose of creating interactive relationships

(Gummesson, 1997)

Internship programs works as a bridge between classroom and a real world practice

- Internship is a useful strategy in helping secure a career-oriented position after graduation

(Callanan & Benzing, 2004)

- build social skills that are beneficial in employment

(French, 2003; Smith, 1996; Taylor, 1988)

- “internships” is one of the appropriate learning modes for employable skills

(Teichler, 2008)

The background of the slide features a light gray silhouette of an industrial facility, including several tall smokestacks and large cylindrical storage tanks. The sky is filled with numerous small, dark silhouettes of birds in flight, creating a sense of movement and activity. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on industrial and environmental themes.

# Information from the Greek "market"



Thus the

need to develop an Internship Program (IP), which emphasizes selected fields of knowledge, has become

increasingly important

in an era where the labor market changes continuously and the inability of Economics graduates to find a job is intensifying



# IP Goals = Dept. Goals

- The systematic support of students in planning their occupational career: **bridge the transition from the classroom to work world**
- The interface of academia with productive units, companies, and their associations
- Information about the availability of employment vacancies and the prospects of their intended three areas of training
- The upgrade of companies and their associations in the region of Thessaloniki: **specialties and the students' scientific skills**

# IP INNOVATIONS

## 1<sup>st</sup> Innovation

The whole project developed *in cooperation with Professional Associations of the City of Thessaloniki* & not through direct contact with companies

# This approach

beneficial for all stakeholders,  
establishes as a priority the development  
of a systematic relationship between  
Department of Economics

&

Associations and their members

&

....

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Innovation

IP orientation

covered positions in field of *specific specialization*

lack of staff in the market:

e-commerce, logistics & export business  
planning (*few empirical studies during teaching*)

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Innovation Just-in-Time Seminars

- Lectures provided:
  - Department Faculty members
  - Experts & consultants from the market

# IP Development

Data base of the companies

Data base of students

Students' Applications (academic grades, Comments, Goals, CV)

Committee from the  
Dpt. Of Economics (3 members)

Supervising Faculty

Just in Time Seminars (JIT)

Evaluation Process  
(questionnaires, interviews, on site visit)

# IP EVALUATION

- ▶ Students' perceptions (mid & final)
- ▶ report by the supervising faculty member
- ▶ employers' perception

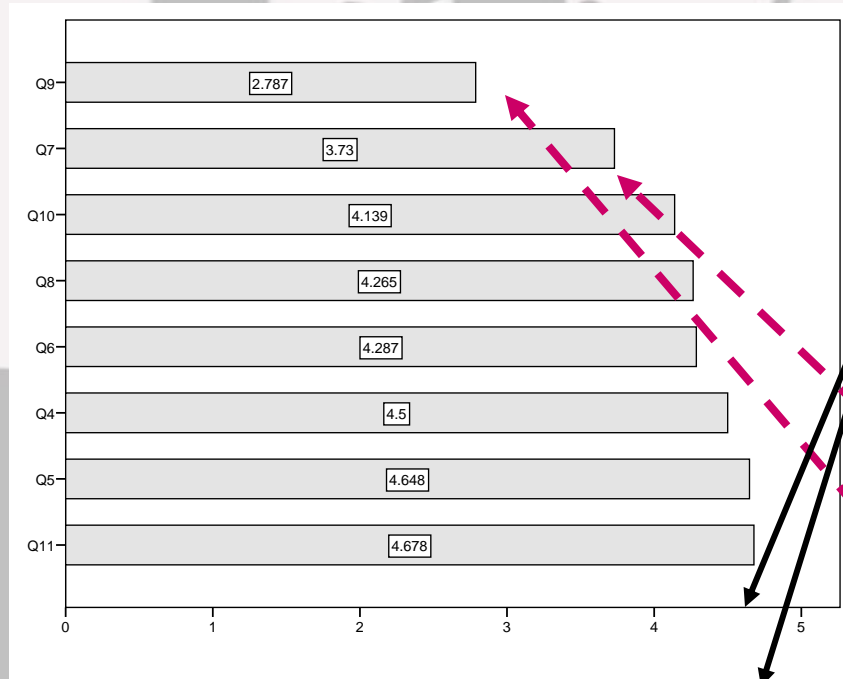
# Students' perceptions (mid)

POSITIVE	Responses		% of
	N	%	N
1. positive attitude – teach & extra knowl.	145	32.2%	71.1%
2. pleasant environ.	129	28.7%	63.2%
3. active action	36	8.0%	17.6%
4. fairness –not extra hours	45	10.0%	22.1%
5. extra motivation-	11	2.4%	5.4%
6. courses relations.	76	16.9%	37.3%
7. smooth transition	1	.2%	.5%
8. remain in the job	7	1.6%	3.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>220.6%</b>

NEGATIVE	Responses		% of
	N	%	N
9. Negative work env.	11	10.0%	12.6%
10. Lack of trust	17	15.5%	19.5%
11. no courses relations.	36	32.7%	41.4%
12. Lack to stay in job	5	4.5%	5.7%
13. extra working hours	26	23.6%	29.9%
14. no benefits work	10	9.1%	11.5%
15. poor infrastructure	5	4.5%	5.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>126.4</b>

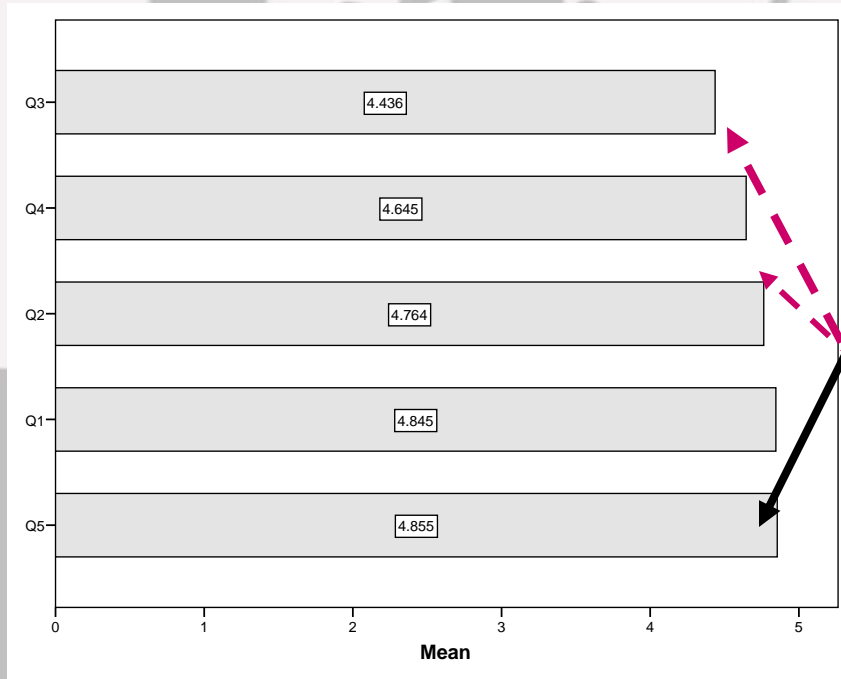


# Students' perceptions (final)



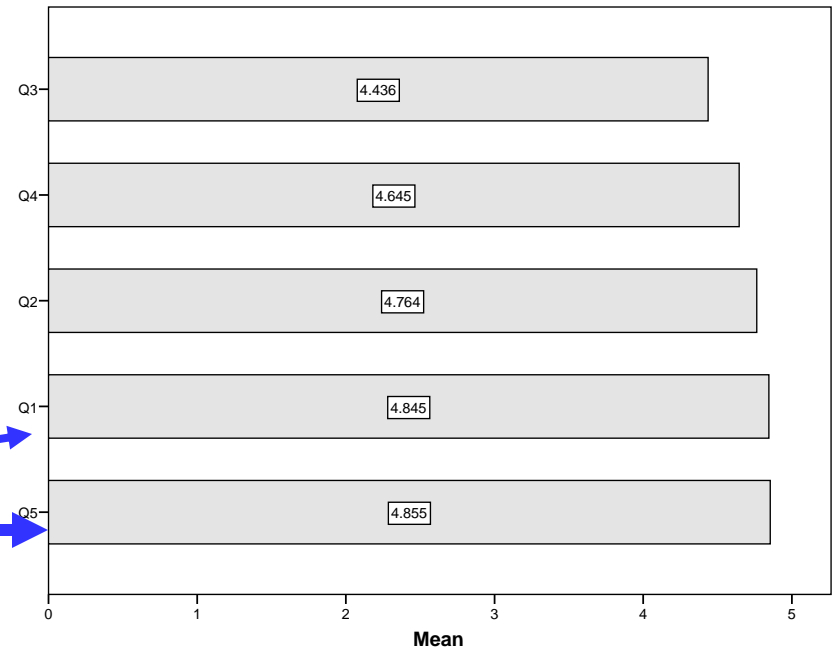
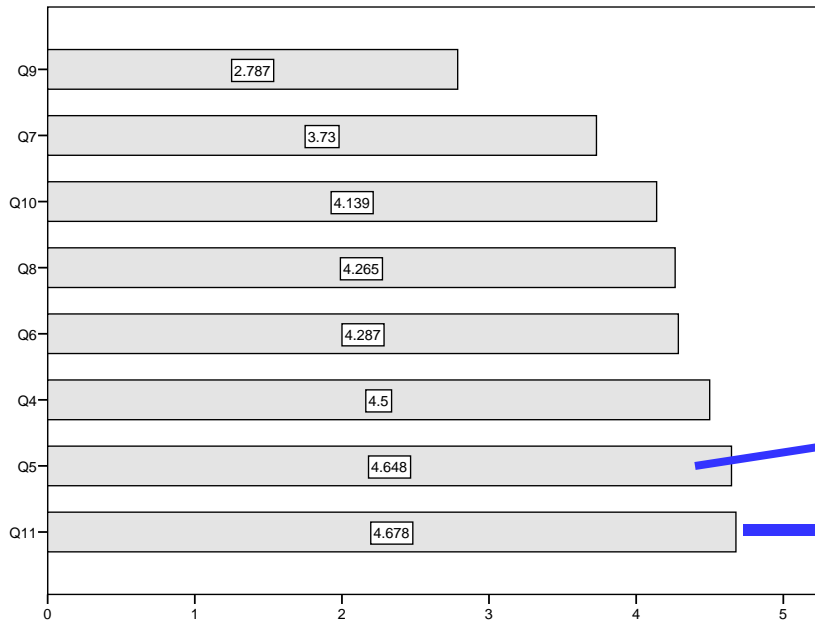
- Q1. Did you were steady worker?
- Q2. Relationships with your co-workers
- Q3. Relationships you're your boss
- Q4. Work environment
- Q5. How effective do you believe that your work was in demand ?
- Q6. Evaluate the degree of the attention that you received from the practical sector of the training
- Q7. Evaluate the work experience that you gained
- Q8. Do you believe that the theoretical knowledge that you gained from your academic department were useful for this particular work?

# Employers' perceptions (final)



- Q5. Evaluate student consistent (steady worker)
- Q1. Evaluate your relationships with the training student
- Q2. Evaluate student relationships with co-workers
- Q4. Evaluate how effective was the student in order to meet the work requirement
- Q3. Evaluate the attention that you gave to the student

# Students' & Employers' perceptions



# Expected benefits

1. Directly benefited: **our students**, who gained knowledge & experience in specific fields.
2. Indirectly benefited:
  - **Professional associations**: develop new practices, expand the scope of their activities and serve their members in a new field.
  - **The Department of Economics**, since this action constitute the beginning of a systematic cooperation, which can be expanded to professions as well.

# Conclusions

- IP run well & students perceived that they gained extra knowledge to **close the gap between theory and praxis**
- The style of supervision (faculty-students-employers) followed during the entire IP placement : working oversight by faculty was **beneficial** to deal with individual problems & provided solutions
- Evidence from students, faculty, & employers = positive picture

# Conclusions-2-

- We learned what changes are required: to make in the future & areas that need more attention in to have satisfied students & employers:
  - more communication with employers
  - possibility for extra practical courses as requirements to all students (business plan, e-commerce, logistics etc.)
- Define gap students' expectations & satisfaction about internships:  
new evaluation procedures

# Conclusions-3-

- More than 25% participants hired
- *IP operated as a measure of the Department's efficiency: graduate employability*
- *Decisions in judging the quality of our program and the results of IP :*  
*students' & employers' perceptions = part of our self-assessment report.*

# IP info

- [www.econ.auth.gr](http://www.econ.auth.gr)
- [http://www.econ.auth.gr/old\\_site/greek/praktiki/Enimerotiko%20gia%20epixiriseis.htm](http://www.econ.auth.gr/old_site/greek/praktiki/Enimerotiko%20gia%20epixiriseis.htm)
- [www.blackboard.lib.auth.gr](http://www.blackboard.lib.auth.gr)
- [http://blackboard.lib.auth.gr/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_id=\\_2\\_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flauncher%3Ftype%3DCourse%26id%3D\\_3070\\_1%26url%3D](http://blackboard.lib.auth.gr/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_id=_2_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flauncher%3Ftype%3DCourse%26id%3D_3070_1%26url%3D)



THANK YOU  
Questions, comments, suggestions?

[antigoni@econ.auth.gr](mailto:antigoni@econ.auth.gr)  
[mardas@econ.auth.gr](mailto:mardas@econ.auth.gr)