



Dear DCEDC Member:

The Northern Illinois University College of Business and DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) is pleased to announce the continuation of a joint program to improve member access to cost-effective, professional human resources. The IGNITE! program provides a structure for member companies to connect with and employ NIU Business students part-time and subsidizes compensation for up to five DCEDC member companies, local start-ups, and local non-profits.

The NIU College of Business has over 2,000 undergraduate students studying Accountancy, Business Administration, Finance, Management, Marketing, and Operations Management & Information Systems. Over seventy-five percent of NIU Business students live in DeKalb County during the school year and nearly sixty percent work anywhere from one to 40 hours a week. Many students are in jobs that do not meaningfully contribute to their professional growth. The NIU Business students are an untapped resource for DCEDC member companies. At the same time, DCEDC member companies are not an instinctual source of work for NIU Business students. The IGNITE! program changes this dynamic.

**How it works:**

To participate in the IGNITE! program, DCEDC member companies must submit an online proposal for a semester-long, part-time (no more than 20 hours per week) position. Positions must include clear goals, defined professional responsibilities, projects and developmental opportunities, and general expectations. The proposal deadline is **July 15, 2020**.

A committee will choose five proposals from DCEDC's current member companies, local start-ups, and local nonprofit organizations for funding. Students will be paid \$10 per hour. The NIU College of Business will subsidize student payment at a rate of \$9.25/hour. The hiring organization will contribute \$250 to support student wages or pay the student \$0.75 per hour directly. The hiring organization will also provide development opportunities to the student.

Selected organizations must assist in promoting their opportunity to students virtually through information sessions and the NIU job board in late August 2020. The selected organizations will be responsible for interviewing, hiring, onboarding, training, and management of the student. The period of employment is August 24, 2020-December 15, 2020 with the possibility of extending into the spring semester. More specific information can be found online at <https://www.cob.niu.edu/experiences/ignite.shtml>.

The NIU College of Business and DCEDC share a similar goal: To strengthen public/private partnerships for the purpose of economic growth and diversification. The IGNITE program is an important step toward achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

Paul Borek, Executive Director

Balaji Rajagopalan, Ph.D. Dean, NIU College of Business

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bottom line period

# Office of the Dean

## IGNITE! Project Brief

### Background/Overview:

The DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) is a 501(c)(3) public-private partnership, established in 1987. DCEDC is celebrating 33 YEARS of facilitating sustainable and diversified economic growth within DeKalb County, Illinois. The DeKalb County Thriving Plan consists of the following goals are 1) Ensure DeKalb County has a talent pipeline that meets the needs of workers and employers; 2) Identify and recruit target industries; 3) Create a countywide business climate in DeKalb County that contributes to business success; 4) Brand and promote the “DeKalb County Experience” that focuses on the county’s unique assets; and 5) Collaborate countywide to maximize the economic health of all communities in DeKalb County.

The NIU College of Business has an undergraduate population of approximately 2,400 students studying Accountancy, Business Administration, Finance, Management, Marketing, and Operations Management & Information Systems. Within the Management major students can choose an emphasis in Entrepreneurship and Social Responsibility. All NIU students can choose to minor in Business Innovation & Entrepreneurship and/or Social Entrepreneurship and/or earn a certificate in Social Entrepreneurship. The Management Department provides financial support for NIU students working in unpaid internships in the entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship sectors through fellowships.

A survey of the 2017-2018 College of Business junior class found more than seventy-five percent of NIU Business students live in DeKalb County during the academic year and nearly sixty percent work anywhere from one to 40 hours a week. Anecdotally, workplaces range from bartending and waitressing to working in an NIU office. The College of Business would like to assist students in securing and funding professional experiences while on campus.

This brief proposes the continuation of the IGNITE! Program. The structure of the IGNITE! Program will allow the NIU College of Business, the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation and various start-up and non-profit organizations to:

1. Improve student access to immersive professional co-op experiences and developmental opportunities in the DeKalb area during the academic year.
2. Improve entrepreneurial and social enterprise access to cost-effective professional human resources in DeKalb County.
3. Strengthen the partnership between NIU and local business and the non-profit community.



# Office of the Dean

## IGNITE! Project Brief

Through this program, DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation member companies, start-ups, and non-profit organizations can access talent to assist with well-defined professional tasks and projects during the fall and spring semesters. The NIU College of Business will promote opportunities to students and subsidize student payment at a rate of \$9.25/hour, up to 20 hours per week for the fall semester, with the possibility of extending into the spring semester. The hiring organization will contribute \$250 per semester or \$0.75 per hour to support student wages and provide development opportunities to the student.



# Office of the Dean

## IGNITE! Project Brief

### Project Parameters:

1. To participate, organizations will submit semester-long, part-time (no more than 20 hours per week) co-op positions proposals for IGNITE! approval. Positions must include clear goals, defined professional responsibilities, projects and developmental opportunities, and general expectations. Details on the work environment and precautions taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should be included. The proposal should be submitted online at [go.niu.edu/IGNITE](http://go.niu.edu/IGNITE)
2. Promotion of the program to organizations will include a letter to DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation member companies, a press release and outreach to parties expressing interest in the past. The College of Business will communicate the opportunity to non-DCEDC companies. The organization proposal deadlines will be July 15, 2020.
3. Each position will be reviewed by a team of College of Business faculty and staff and five will be selected. Positions not selected will be evaluated to determine fit for other experiential learning activities in the College of Business.
4. Selected positions will be promoted to College of Business students using virtual information sessions and Huskies Get Hired. Additional promotion will occur in classes, to student organizations and through advisors and NIU College of Business social media.
5. Each organization will create an account on Huskies Get Hired!. Interested students will be asked to submit a cover letter and resume through the system. Each organization will receive instruction on accessing application materials and interviewing resources available through Career Services.
6. The hiring organization is responsible for interviewing, hiring, onboarding, training and management of the student.
7. The College of Business will subsidize student payment at \$9.25 per hour. The hiring organization will contribute \$250 per semester to the College of Business to support student wages or pay the student a minimum of \$0.75 per hour directly.
8. The period of employment is August 24, 2020 – December 15, 2020.



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## IGNITE! Project Brief

<b>Schedule:</b>	July 15, 2020 – IGNITE! proposals due July 30, 2020 – IGNITE! positions selected August 10, 2020 – IGNITE! positions loaded on Huskies Get Hired August 25, 2020 – IGNITE! Virtual Information Session
<b>Target:</b>	Support <b>five</b> students in <b>five</b> organizations for engagements during the fall semester with the possibility of extending into spring semester pending fund availability.
<b>Total Resources Requested:</b>	Approx. \$16,000 - \$32,000

