Sustainability Starts Early
Creating a Great Ops Internship

Fatema Boxwala
Production Engineering
Motivation
Retention

The youth are our future

- Interns are your future talent pool
- Not usually introduced to Ops/SRE in school
- Giving them their first impression of the tech world
- Lasting technical contributions

@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18
Livin’ The Life

Starting from a place of empathy

- Short-term full-time employees
- Simultaneously doing work for school
- Often far from home in a new city
- Little or no benefits
- Less experienced than everyone else
Before they start
Talk to your intern

The secret sauce of every relationship

- Projects and experience
- Expectations (yours and theirs)
- Information and resources
- Logistics

@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18
Are you ready for an intern?

It’s a big commitment

- Mentor commitment
- Buy-in from other team members
- Project preparation
- Documentation

@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18
Chastity Blackwell, Yelp

“The 7 Deadly Sins of Documentation”

www.usenix.org/srecon18europe/program
Designing a good project

Maybe even a great one

- Incorporating their skills
- Something that will actually be used
- Involving multiple people/teams/technologies
- Well scoped for their time frame
- Related to your work
During the Internship
Set them up for success

When they succeed you succeed

- Explaining access to resources
- Frequent check-ins
- Providing opportunity for growth
- Treat them like a full member of the team
Treat them like full-times

If it sounds cruel you might have a whole other problem

- Full access and permissions (sudo, prod)
- Helping with incident response
- Shadowing on-call, on-point
- Working on the ticket queue

@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18
Mentorship

“Did you know you can apply for this thing?”

Advocacy

“We should consider them for this thing!”

Sponsorship

“I think you should do this thing and I can set that up.”

@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18
Expectations and feedback

Feedback is a gift

- Building realistic expectations together
- Providing regular feedback (and asking for it in return)
- Soliciting feedback from other team members
- Ask Your Intern How They’re Doing

@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18
When it goes wrong
My intern is sad, what can I do?

It happens to the best of us

- Offer new options
- Different hours, different project, different timeline
- Pivot expectations
- Be their best advocate

@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18
All the mentors I've had before

Anna Lorimer
Daniel Porteous
Kelly McBride
Chastity Blackwell
Arshia Mufti
Emil Stolarsky
Avleen Vig
facebook
@fatty_box
fbox.ca/srecon18